

# gay COMMUNITY NEWS

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FOR FIFTEEN YEARS, THE LESBIAN AND GAY WEEKLY

## AIDS actions coast to coast

*A national network, galvanized by the March on Washington, prepares for nine days of acting up*

By Chris Bull

SAN FRANCISCO — With plans that include unfurling the "Silence = Death" banner at a New York Mets game to civil disobedience at the Mexican border in California, AIDS activists from around the country are gearing up for an unprecedented nine days of simultaneous protests April 29 to May 7.

Coordinated by ACT NOW (AIDS Coalition to Network, Organize and Win) in San Francisco, the National Spring AIDS Actions focus on many aspects of the disease. Themes for each day's events include: homophobia, care for PWAs, AIDS in minority communities, AIDS on campus, AIDS in prison, AIDS and women, and AIDS as a world-wide crisis. The nine days of actions culminate with massive marches on state capitals across the country.

Sit-ins, die-ins, candlelight vigils, marches, civil disobedience, petitions, forums,

teach-ins and guerilla theater are among the events planned by local groups. Organizers hope to maximize local involvement and national media attention through the coordinated events.

"In little over one year, AIDS activism thrives from coast to coast, demanding a response to the disease. It's absolutely incredible," said Michael Miles of ACT UP/NY.

ACT NOW and the Spring AIDS Actions grew out of a meeting of AIDS activists entitled "Agitate, Educate and Organize" on October 12 in Washington, D.C., the day after last year's National Lesbian and Gay March on Washington. ACT NOW demands include: funding for culturally sensitive, local and worldwide educational programs; coordinated research; a national

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## Male student slams women's studies course

*Media campaign by Peter Schaub denounces lesbianism and "political content"*

By Nancy De Luca

SEATTLE — A male student who was kicked out of a women's studies survey course at the University of Washington has launched a public campaign against the course. Peter Schaub, a college senior and business major, has claimed that the course, Women's Studies 200, contained political proselytizing, pro-socialist views, anti-male

sentiment, and support of lesbianism. While student activists have denounced Schaub's actions as homophobic and misogynist, faculty members are under an administration-imposed gag order. The state legislature has also held hearings to investigate Schaub's claims.

According to a report in the New York Times, Schaub repeatedly asked questions in class which challenged the course content and the views of the two instructors, Donna Langston and Dana Michele. Michele, according to the Times, resigned from her teaching position after the course ended.

According to a source familiar with the case, problems between Schaub and the instructors of the course started soon after the course began in January. By mid-January, instructors reported the presence of a disruptive student to their supervisor and eventually to the appropriate deans. After keeping files on Schaub's behavior and meeting with him and the university's ombudsman, university administrators and the instructors agreed that further class disruption should result in Schaub's being banned from the class. After another disruptive incident, Schaub was banned after having attended only six weeks of the ten-week quarter. Schaub brought complaints about his treatment to Assistant Dean James Nason who reinstated Schaub by awarding him a passing grade in the course and instructing him not to attend fur-

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IN THIS WEEK'S  
CENTERSPREAD

## SAFER SEX INFO

FOR ALL OF US



PLUS: ANOTHER TRUE LIFE  
SAFER SEX STORY

## Achtenberg loses Calif. Assembly seat bid

*Low voter turnout and non-confrontational campaign by well-connected political veteran John Burton squelch lesbian lawyer's first try for elected office*

By Miranda Kolbe

SAN FRANCISCO — With less than one third of the voters turning out to cast their ballots in an April 12 special election, lesbian attorney and political newcomer Roberta Achtenberg lost the race for California's 16th Assembly district seat to her opponent, John Burton. The seat had been open since Art Agnos was elected mayor of the city in December of last year.

Burton garnered 52 percent of the vote to Achtenberg's 36 percent.

Achtenberg campaigners attribute her loss to the relatively short duration of the race, Burton endorsements by three of the major women office holders in the area, and burn-out in San Francisco's gay and lesbian community.

Burton's successful strategy of ignoring Achtenberg's challenges throughout the campaign was likely another factor. "Burton consistently refused to enter into debate with Roberta," despite her repeated requests for him to do so, said Achtenberg campaign worker Alane Freund. When asked how he and Achtenberg differed in their political stances, Burton's customary reply was, "The only real difference between Roberta and me is that I have political experience, and she doesn't." His nonchalance was evidenced by a statement he made several weeks before the election: "My polls are telling me the real race isn't for first between me and Roberta. It's for second place between Roberta and Max Woods, the Republican." (Woods received only 4 percent of the vote.)

Burton had reason to believe a risk-free campaign would stand him well. He enjoys tremendous name recognition since the Burton family has played a role in San Francisco's Democratic politics for nearly 30 years. Burton himself is a former member of Congress as were his brother Phil Burton

and sister-in-law Sala Burton. Burton also garnered endorsements from key party members such as California's Speaker of the House Willie Brown. For Achtenberg, however, Burton's refusal to delineate his stances on the issues proved a major frustration.

"I thought the race would provide a better forum for discussion of ideas.... It's been devoid of political and intellectual content," Achtenberg said in an interview with the San Francisco *Sentinel*.

Consequently, toward the end of the race Achtenberg began focusing more sharply on Burton's record, accusing Burton of missing 1,000 key congressional votes between 1977 and 1982 and missing 70 percent of the votes

*"If the principal female politicians are going to support a male candidate over a lesbian, then it's difficult to convince straight women to support [Achtenberg]."*

during his last year in office. Achtenberg said in a speech she gave to the Press Club, "Nationally syndicated columnist Jack Anderson had it right when he named John Burton as one of the six least effective members of Congress."

Burton defended himself by stating that his cocaine and alcohol abuse during that time affected his capacity to perform the job well, but that he has been clean and sober for five years.

Achtenberg received some criticism for her attack on Burton's absenteeism from  
Continued on page 3



University of Washington student Peter Schaub: "(The instructors) ardently boast of lesbianism and deliver shallow sermons on socialism while making hate-breeding statements about men."





## Quote of the week

"Then I went to Los Angeles for a screen test, and asked the casting director if I should have a chance at the part if I were known to be gay. She said 'Why not?' and I said 'What if the director knew?' and she said, 'So what? He's gay — and so is his wife.' That was when I knew that I would have no more of this hypocrisy."

— *Shakespearean actor Ian McKellen explaining why he felt it was so important to come out to the audience at the prestigious Elliott Norton Award Ceremony sponsored by the League of Boston Theaters. McKellen has also done fundraising for a London-based AIDS hospice and has actively worked against Clause 29, a British legislation which forbids the promotion of homosexuality or funding of projects which promote homosexuality.* □

## Tennessee printers won't take a Dare

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — *Dare*, the first lesbian/gay newspaper in Middle Tennessee, ran into snafus during its second week of publication when three local printers refused to print the paper. Mid-South Press, which printed the weekly's premiere issue in late March, was allegedly "too busy" to publish another, according to a *Dare* editorial. Two other companies also declined *Dare's* business. Finally — with press time fast approaching — a small town daily, the Lebanon *Democrat*, agreed to print the paper.

Stuart Bivin, *Dare's* editor, told the Nashville *Banner*, "We called all over town and finally ended up at the *Democrat*. It's kind of ironic that Nashville is a printing and publishing capital but we had to go 30 miles east to Lebanon to get printed. At least they believe strongly in First Amendment rights."

Problems aside, *Dare's* early efforts have received wide community and advertising support. The newspaper, produced by volunteers and distributed free, is being financed almost entirely by ad sales and expects to break even within a month. The handsome publication which sports a pink triangle in its masthead may soon expand beyond eight pages. According to Bivin, *Dare* hopes to serve as a resource for lesbians and gay men, and to offer news, features and opinion pages. *Dare* may be contacted at Box 40422, Nashville, TN, 37204-0422; (615) 292-9623. □ Elizabeth Pincus

## LA supervisors issue bathhouse regs

LOS ANGELES — The County Board of Supervisors has approved new regulations which may lead to the closure of about a dozen LA bathhouses. According to *Update*, the regulations prohibit any kind of sexual activity in the baths "that is anal or vaginal, but not necessarily the merely masturbatory."

This move was met with the usual disagreement about whether closing bathhouses eliminates a major locus for the spread of HIV, or whether it simply drives sexual activity underground, making it more difficult to educate people about AIDS.

The regulations cover any commercial establishment which charges admission and offers the use of a swimming pool, steam

room, communal bath, and movies or videos — but hotels and motels are specifically exempt. Baths will be monitored by undercover investigators, and arrests will be a basis for closing a facility. Two years ago a previous effort to close four baths directly was voided by the courts. □ Lori Kenschaft

## The agony of 'victory'

WASHINGTON — Rev. Timothy Healy, president of Georgetown University, recently sent a letter to faculty and alumni proclaiming victory in the university's eight-year legal battle with gay and lesbian student groups on campus. In a court ordered settlement, the university was forced to pay the student groups' legal costs and to provide the two groups involved in the suit full access to university financing, facilities and services. However, the court ruling upheld the university's right to refuse to recognize the groups on the grounds that it would have violated Catholic doctrine that homosexuality is immoral.

According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, Healy's letter claims that the university achieved all of its major goals: it was not forced to provide university funding for religious services for the gay groups; the university will not be used as a "staging ground" for gay community activities; the university avoided any "direct advocacy of homosexual acts"; and the university was able to prevent any use of its name in a way which might imply that it considers homosexuality "morally neutral." What the letter failed to mention was the huge financial cost for the "moral victory." The university has been ordered to pay court costs and legal fees for the student groups, which, when added to its own legal costs, brings the tab to \$750,000. In addition, the university's stand violated the District of Columbia's anti-discrimination law, rendering the university ineligible for tax-exempt bonds. Lost bond revenues will cost the university between \$30 and \$50 million over the next 30 years. □ Nancy De Luca



Ellie Boswell

## Variety show to benefit PWAs

SOMERVILLE, Mass. — The Somerville Committee for a Response to AIDS will hold its second annual fundraiser on May 16 to benefit people with AIDS (PWAs) and to support of community education. The variety show called "A Time to Care" is planned for Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the Boston Baked Theater Company, 255 Elm Street in Davis Square, Somerville (near Boston). Featured entertainers include singer Ellie Boswell, bongo players Lorraine Lee and Bennett Hammond, master of ceremonies Lenny Grandchamp and others.

The fundraiser has received the endorsement of numerous Somerville organizations and the support of Mayor Gene Brune, who is serving as honorary chair of the event. For ticket information or to volunteer with Somerville Committee for a Response to AIDS, call 666-5299. □ Elizabeth Pincus

## New Mexico group gets the word out

ALBUQUERQUE — Common Bond, a

lesbian and gay organization here, has reasserted the power of the written word. GLUE (Gays and Lesbians for Understanding and Education), the group's committee, has produced the following:

- stickers saying "You are not alone" which also list the number of the Gay/Lesbian Hotline — for the hit-and-run gay graffiti activist;
- business cards printed with "Congratulations. You have just been helped by a gay person." — to be given out whenever someone has reason to be grateful to you;
- and a book list to help non-gay people in their efforts to understand gay identity and experience.

□ Lori Kenschaft

## Nice Jewish girls

BOSTON — A Jewish lesbian group is currently forming for ongoing discussion, support, food and fun. The new group will focus on politics, cultural identity, holiday celebrations and more. For information or to join the group, call Tovah at 864-5257, or Susan at 364-9172.

□ Jennie McKnight

## Fairies can't dance in the Magic Kingdom

ANAHEIM, CA — All is not right in the land of fantasy, when even a successful lawsuit doesn't prevent security guards from stopping same sex couples from dancing together.

In 1984 Disneyland was found to be in violation of California's Unruh Civil Rights Act, which prohibits arbitrary discrimination by businesses on the basis of sexual



orientation. In that case, Andrew Ross Exler brought suit after being thrown off the dance floor for dancing with another man. A mere four years later, reports *Update*, the amusement park is up to the same old games.

Some forty students dancing during an outing for gay and lesbian university groups noticed that security guards were surrounding them. When a slow dance started they were told they could not dance together. Christopher Drake, Eric Hubert, and Jeffrey Stabile have filed a lawsuit.

This time, "the suit asks for punitive damages from Disneyland because of its blatant disregard" of the earlier ruling, according to attorney Leroy Walker.

□ Lori Kenschaft

NEWSNOTES  
COMPILED BY  
JENNIE MCKNIGHT



**4th annual Boston GAY and LESBIAN FILM FESTIVAL**

Fri/Sat April 29/30:  
VERA/THE MAGIC GARDEN OF STANLEY SWEETHEART  
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RIGHTS AND REACTIONS/  
HALLOWEENIE/NOT ALL PARENTS ARE STRAIGHT/POUVOIR INTIME/  
JE TU IL ELLE  
Wed/Thu May 4/5:  
MY LIFE FOR ZARAH LEANDER/  
BURROUGHS/THE OUTSIDERS/  
NIGHT ZOO  
Fri May 6:  
MY LIFE FOR ZARAH LEANDER/  
BURROUGHS/THE OUTSIDERS/VERA  
Sat May 7:  
THE OUTSIDERS/VERA  
Sun May 8:  
NIGHT ZOO/ARIA/  
SALOME'S LAST DANCE  
Mon/Wed May 9/11:  
CHUCK SOLOMON/  
TOGETHER AND APART/40 DEUCE/  
IN A SHALLOW GRAVE  
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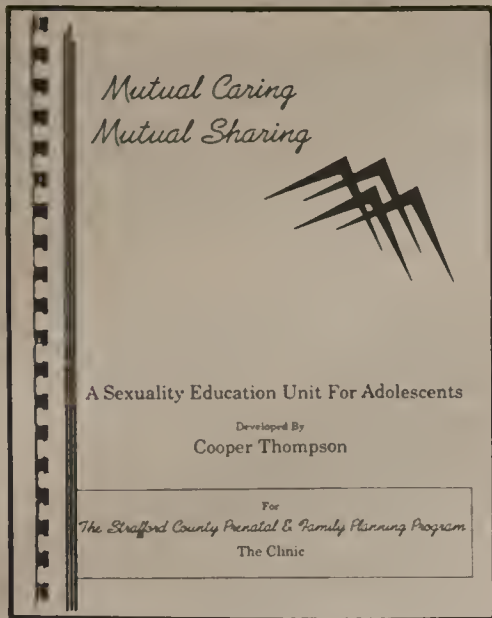
# Pro-gay educational booklet draws fire

By Elizabeth Pincus

DOVER, N.H. — A sex education booklet produced by a county family planning clinic is under threat of censorship from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). According to a New Hampshire publication, *Foster's Daily Democrat*, the HHS has been instructed by the U.S. Population Affairs office to block further distribution of "Mutual Caring, Mutual Sharing," a booklet designed to assist secondary school teachers. Though HHS cited violations of Title 10 guidelines as the reason for attempting to bar the manual, producers of the booklet said they suspect the HHS objects to its positive presentation of same-sex relationships.

The publication — produced by the Strafford County Prenatal and Family Planning Program of Strafford County, New Hampshire (The Clinic) — is only used in classes where participation is voluntary and students' parents have granted written permission. The curriculum was developed as one part of a three-year demonstration project funded by federal Title 10 Special Initiative monies. The HHS has alleged the following Title 10 violations: The Clinic did not properly follow the review process when writing the curriculum; the curriculum does not encourage family participation in family planning decisions; and the curriculum contains factual inaccuracies and inappropriate emphasis in material.

Chuck Rhoades, executive director of The Clinic, stated the project in no way violates Title 10 regulations and that the contents of the booklet are soundly based on factual information and research. "Mutual Caring, Mutual Sharing" has been



Sex education booklet scorned by feds

nominated for a state health promotion award through the Division of Public Health Services. Rhoades has asked professional sexuality organizations throughout the U.S. to review and comment on the booklet. He said he hopes widespread support for the publication will stem the HHS' efforts to undermine the project.

The Clinic is also under fire from some New Hampshire politicians, including Sen. Gordon Humphrey (R-N.H.) and the Strafford County commissioners. In response to local newspaper coverage of the HHS' accusations, the commissioners froze \$39,000 in county funds for The Clinic's prenatal care program, which serves 300 low-income women and infants. Though this program is unrelated to "Mutual Caring, Mutual Sharing," the commissioners stated their action is based on opposition to the publication's statement that "sexual attraction to members of the same sex is healthy."

*A public forum in support of The Clinic is planned for late April. For more information, contact Chuck Rhoades at (603) 749-2346.*

□ filed from Boston

# Chicago holds first lesbian wellness conference

Event draws over 300 Midwesterners

By Rachel Pepper

CHICAGO — More than 300 women from the Midwest attended Chicago's first Lesbian Wellness Conference April 16. The conference, sponsored by Gay and Lesbian Horizons and held at the University of Illinois at Chicago, included keynote addresses by Rev. Emilie Townes and humorist Kate Clinton. Participants browsed among displays in a resource room and could choose from more than 30 workshops on a wide variety of topics concerning the "wellness" of lesbians.

The day began with Townes' address, in which she stressed the need for lesbians to respect each others' differences while working together for social change. She asked the mostly white audience to consider the experiences of lesbians of color, who face oppressive attitudes and actions based on racism as well as homophobia. She closed her address by urging the women to "order the universe according to our own vision of beauty."

After Townes' keynote the conference broke into workshops on topics covering many aspects of the physical, mental, spiritual, financial, legal, and emotional health of lesbians. These included sessions on domestic violence in lesbian relationships, internalized homophobia, surviving dysfunctional families and incest, activism and political organizing, growing older, lesbians and AIDS, and Clinton's "Humor as a Healing Force."

While some workshops were led by community groups such as Feminists on the Offensive, an anti-pornography collective,

others were born of personal experience. For example, Nancy Lanouc, owner of Chicago's popular Women's Gym, gave a session called "Nurturing the Warrior Within" on her fight against breast cancer.

Two separate workshops were dedicated to the hot topic of lesbian parenting. In both "Lesbians Choosing Children" and "You've Got Children? I Thought You Were A Dyke," panelists discussed the joys and disadvantages of lesbian mothering. These included co-parenting, alternative fertilization, coming out to kids, and increasing community support for lesbians having children by choice.

One of the most popular sessions of the day was "Aunt Mathilda — Or What Your Mother Never Told You About Being in a Lesbian Relationship," led by several couples who had each been together at least eight years. All of the couples stressed that their enduring relationships were not based on any "magic formula" but instead were built on respect, dealing with conflict, and real dedication to their relationship.

In the day's closing keynote, Kate Clinton spoke of the value of humor in our lives within other more serious agendas. She urged lesbians to come out if possible and not to become "diffused and mainstream" by letting the current political climate in the United States render us invisible again. She closed her speech and the conference by urging all those in attendance to concentrate on "our own issues" in a culture "by and for lesbians." □

## Achtenberg

Continued from page 1

Kim Corsaro, the editor of *Coming Up!*, a gay and lesbian monthly. Corsaro wrote in an editorial endorsing Achtenberg, "Legitimate questions could be raised about Burton's ability to handle stress, but Achtenberg's attacks on Burton are not that straightforward and often come across as cheap shots."

Achtenberg also received criticism for describing Burton as "not pro-gay." Burton and the Burton family have been considered good advocates for gay men and lesbians for almost 30 years.

It seems doubtful, however, that adverse reactions to Achtenberg's negative campaigning significantly affected the outcome of the race.

Although Achtenberg won a majority of votes in the upper Mission and Castro precincts which are heavily populated by lesbians and gay men, she did not expand her base significantly beyond those areas. Black votes overwhelmingly went for Burton, as did those in Chinatown, the precinct with the highest concentration of Asian residents. Bob Anderson, Achtenberg campaign field coordinator, said, "Burton has long ties stretching back over 30 years with the Black community," which he said made it difficult for Achtenberg to compete.

Anderson said he believes the votes of straight women were a decisive factor in the campaign. Women voted for Burton over Achtenberg at a higher rate than men. He attributed this difference to Burton endorsements from the "three best known women politicians in the area." Congresswomen Nancy Pelosi and Barbara Boxer, and San Francisco Supervisor Nancy Walker all backed Burton. "The Burton campaign spent probably as much as \$150,000 sending out letters from these individuals to people in the district urging people to vote for him," Anderson said. "If the principle female politicians are going to support a male candidate over a lesbian, then it's difficult to convince women to support [her]."

Although voter turnout among gay men and lesbians was much higher than among other groups, local political analyst and Achtenberg campaign worker David Binder was disappointed that the showing was not better. He contrasted the turnout with last year's congressional race between Nancy Pelosi and gay Supervisor Harry Britt, which drew 17 percent, or 2,700 more gay and lesbian voters than this race. Since 66

percent of gay men and lesbians voted for Achtenberg, according to Binder's data, a larger gay and lesbian turnout could have translated into the single percentage point Achtenberg needed to force a run-off election with Burton in June. As it is, Burton must run again in the Democratic primary in June — as Agnos would have, but he is expected to face little or no opposition.

Binder attributed diminished gay participation at the polls in part to burn-out in the gay and lesbian community. "It's been race after race after race," Binder said, "and now with AIDS getting worse and



Lesbian candidate Roberta Achtenberg

worse, people's energies are diluted. There's a limit to the numbers of volunteers and the amount of time people are willing to donate right now." Binder also said he felt that voters didn't take Achtenberg's challenge seriously because "Roberta began this race as a total unknown and was given very low probability at the polls."

Although in an emotional moment on election night Achtenberg pledged to run against Burton in the primary in June, she has since decided against continuing the campaign since her chances of winning that race would be slim. Campaign worker Freud said, "Roberta has never been willing to run as a symbolic candidate; she was in the race to win. Roberta feels that it would be unfair to ask the community to support her to run again, rather than putting their energy into other struggles that are coming up, such as the LaRouche initiative."

Achtenberg told supporters on election night that she considers her campaign a victory, as she did far better than most had expected her to do. At the beginning of the campaign, political analysts were predicting Burton would win 90 percent of the votes. Achtenberg has not yet announced her future plans. □

## Harold Pickett

New York gay publisher and GCN contributor, dies of AIDS

By Michael Bronski

NEW YORK — Harold E. Pickett, publisher of *The New York City News*, died March 31, at St. Vincent's Hospital from complications of AIDS. He was 41 and a resident of Manhattan.

Pickett was known as a gay activist and writer for more than a decade. In 1979 he founded *The New York City News*, a paper for the New York lesbian and gay community. The paper quickly became a mainstay of city gay life, but Pickett had to close the paper in 1986 when he became too ill to work.

From 1975 to 1979 Pickett also wrote frequently for *Gay Community News*. In addition to reviewing plays and books, he did personality interviews and wrote an ongoing column, "New York, New York" which covered both the mainstream and activist political scene. Pickett's writings for *GCN* were particularly important since the paper at that time was struggling to overcome limited resources and personnel and begin to cover national news. By providing first hand coverage of the political and cultural activities of New York, he helped establish *GCN*'s national identity and set the groundwork for much of our later political coverage.

Reading the old "New York, New York" columns it becomes clear that Harold Pickett had his finger on the pulse of New York gay life. A typical column will recount a bitter City Council meeting at which the gay rights bill was argued, the efforts of the Gay Men's Alliance to start a letter writing campaign to the *Village Voice* protesting Nat Hentoff's homophobia, a demonstration at the Canadian Consulate by Gay Activists Alliance (GAA) and the Coalition for Lesbian and Gay Rights (CLGR) to protest the shutting down of *The Body Politic*, as

well as a notice urging people to go to the CLGR benefit at the Silhouette Bar.

In addition to the meetings and the demonstrations Pickett also put much of himself in the column. In early 1979 he noted that the Gay Clone Poets, a group of which he was a member, was putting out their first publication. Pickett described his pride at being able to work in a group that was trying to merge art and politics. In the same column he also noted he had been elected President of the Flamingo Friends of America, a group that fought for the ecological well being of the bird and also promoted its recognition as a cultural and regional symbol.

Pickett is survived by his long time companion Jim Ferguson, as well as his parents and several siblings. There will be a memorial service for Harold Pickett at The New York Lesbian and Gay Community Center, 208 W. 13th St., N.Y., April 20 at 6:00.

□ filed from Boston

## Jeff Veazey

Dancer-choreographer dies of AIDS

By Michael Bronski

NEW YORK — Jeff Veazey, a dancer and choreographer, died of complications arising from AIDS at his home in Manhattan, April 9. He was 33 years old.

Veazey began his New York career by dancing in the Broadway companies of *Sugar Babies*, *Sophisticated Ladies*, *The Grand Tour* and *Dr. Jazz*. He also appeared in many regional and road tour productions. In the mid-'80s he directed and choreographed the *Broadway Tonite* revues as well as *From Broadway to Hollywood* at the Theater Du Ronde in Paris.

But Jeff Veazey was best known to both off-Broadway and gay audiences as the choreographer of Charles Busch's camp musicals *Vampire Lesbians of Sodom* and *Psycho Beach Party*. Veazey's dance numbers captured the lunacy of Busch's satiric look at both 1930's Hollywood, in *Vampire Lesbians* and 1950's teen movies in *Psycho Beach Party*. □



## Spring fling!!

Next week the **GCN** staff will be flinging itself off to a much-needed vacation (so read slowly and make this issue last for two weeks). Our offices will be closed April 25-29 while we go out and do whatever it is we have to do to rid us of the rain and cold and bring Spring on for real. But don't you worry, we'll be back the first week in May and we'll all feel rejuvenated, empowered and racked with post-vacation depression. See you soon,  
Your pals at **GCN**

**GCN welcomes all letters to the editor except personal attacks. Carbon copies of letters sent elsewhere are printed on a space-available basis. The opinions expressed here are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership. Letters must be TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED AND NO LONGER THAN THREE PAGES. Send to: Community Voices, GCN, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.**

## Prisoners have no success with AIDS groups

Dear *GCN*:

I thought you might find the enclosed article interesting. ["Prisoners with AIDS protest", by Peter Aleshire, in the 4/6/88 *Arizona Republic*]. The facility at Phoenix is not the only one which houses prisoners with AIDS. My understanding is that when prisoners reach a critical stage, they are then transferred to Florence, AZ prison, where conditions are even worse [than those described in the article about the Phoenix prison].

I have contacted all the local AIDS support groups in an effort to get them to do something for those prisoners with AIDS, but with absolutely no success. They won't even respond to my requests for basic information pamphlets. I've pointed out to all of them that if pressure isn't brought to bear by outside groups, the Dept. of Corrections will make no effort to provide even the basic necessities of life, let alone needed medical necessities. I'm sure this situation, or something similar, probably exists in all prisons.

Richard Anderson  
Box 3100 — 31915  
Goodyear, AZ 85338

## I don't always agree, but I appreciate GCN

Dear *GCN*:

Yuk! Egg on my face! With my usual wait 'til it's history *GCN* reading habits, I opened my April Fools issue and began to read the election year news; it did not occur to this avid reader that anything was being spoofed until the second paragraph. (I attributed the *GCB* abbreviation to a typo overlooked by an overworked/underpaid staff error.)

When *GCB* appeared the second time I said to myself, "Self, this is the annual April lampoon." Maybe it would have been sooner realized had I opened my issue the day I pulled it out of that Post Office Box. This is always one of my favorite issues, especially the classifieds. Enroll me in the Tampon of the Month Club. Is there a volume discount for lovers? Monogrammed strings are a novel idea — my lover will never use my last rocket before I blast off again!

A few other thoughts while I'm writing...

Your new layout looks great, but there seems to be empty space each week. Aren't there features, cartoons, ads, etc. that could fill the space? Maybe I'm not being realistic because I thought *GCN* was always short on money, never on journalism. These empty column inches represent potential revenue, don't they? I can't recall the old layout leaving any empty space.

Your feature "Hindsight" maximizes back page space neatly. Liz Galst's piece "At home with themselves and me" was aptly titled. A portrait documentary of gay and lesbian couples certainly is a tangible legacy sorely needed. However, if the pictures *GCN* printed are representative of Sage Sohler's work, the photos lacked that candid quality necessary to communicate couple's uniqueness and intimacy. Sohler

did not capture anything on film that did not appear staged. Couples are definitely more impromptu and animated than her photographs portray. I suggest we demand a retake!

Thanks again for all the great work. I don't always agree, but I always appreciate.

With Pride,  
Nancy M. Gill  
Brockton, MA

## But don't call him "honey"

Dear *GCN*:

There are all sorts of stereotypes about gay people out there — that we're impulsive, overly sensitive, ineffectual, unable to mount a boycott, economically insignificant. Up in Kellogg's Land, they apparently think we're just plain stupid.

A few weeks ago I wrote a letter to Public Affairs at Kellogg's expressing my disgust with their Nut & Honey cereal commercial. This is the ad featuring various vignettes in which one person asks, "What's to eat?" and another person answers, "Nut & Honey," which is misheard as "Nothin', honey," with situational "comic" results. This culminates in a blatant bit of media fag-bashing, when a cattle trail cook gives the same reply to his cowboy buddies, who snarl in unison and draw their guns on him. You just don't call a manly American cowboy "honey."

The fact that the ad is supposed to be innocent and funny makes it all the more insidious. Joke or no joke, it's the same mentality that gave us the "homosexual panic" murder defense. And in this case, the message is largely aimed at children.

This is part of the self-serving and absurdly rationalizing reply I received from Joseph M. Stewart, Vice President of Public Affairs at Kellogg's:

"Please forgive the brief delay in our response to your letter dated February 25, 1988. We have been assessing our 'Nut'n Honey' ad to determine if we overlooked a subtlety in the application of our stringent advertising policy during the creation of this commercial.

"May I begin by assuring you that Kellogg Company has in no way, intentionally or inadvertently, attempted to communicate a political, economic, or socio-morale position, impression, or persuasion in our 'Nut & Honey Crunch' ad. The use of the response, 'Nut'n Honey,' by the cook draws a reaction from the *hungry* cowboys who have been working hard and are eager to eat. We believe that in order to interpret this scene as an anti-gay expression, the viewer must first change the era, the scene, and the motivation....we hope you will appreciate that we cannot allow ourselves to impulsively overreact to unjustified misinterpretations. To do so would destroy the integrity of our high standards of advertising and more importantly would destroy the trust and confidence of consumers."

In other words: Fuck off. End of dialogue. It's certainly enough to make me lose my appetite. Besides, you know us fags, always "impulsively overreacting." So sensitive. Always imagining things.

I hope readers will take the time to drop a line to Mr. Stewart (Public Affairs, One Kellogg Square, PO Box 3599, Battle Creek, MI 49016). A postcard will do. It only has to say: "Your Nut & Honey commercial stinks, and so do your excuses. I'm not buying it." He'll get the message.

But don't call him "honey."

Regards,  
Steven Saylor  
San Francisco, CA

## We must not be ashamed of our sorrow

Dear *GCN*:

Thanks and gratitude to Janice Irvine for "A Community Learns to Mourn," (*GCN*, March 20-26, 1988).

My parents died in 1967 — I was twelve years old. While at times I have been "glad" that I was spared the hardship of coming out to them, I have felt more shame regarding the enormity and longevity of my grief for them than I have felt awkward about being a lesbian.

The AIDS crisis has brought home to me how mourning has made me whole. When those in our inner circles are dying, have died, have been diagnosed with AIDS, I know that we *must* mourn and embrace our

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Opinions reflected in "editorials" represent the views of the paid staff collective. Signed letters and columns represent the views and opinions of the authors only. We encourage all readers to send us comments, criticism, and information, and to volunteer and become members.

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# Creating outrageous visions: AIDS education for women

By Janice Irvine

The following is a speech the author delivered at the Women and AIDS conference held in Boston April 9.

Suddenly it's become more fashionable to talk about sex. Many of us who have been doing sex education for years are suddenly astonished to find ourselves speaking in places where, even two years ago, we might have been forcibly removed had we shown up and started talking about anal intercourse. Last week I found myself at a Catholic girls school in Quincy. I usually don't "do" high school girls, but I went because I thought it would be interesting to hear their questions and comments, and also because I didn't know until I got there that it was a Catholic school.

Having endured 12 years of Catholic school myself, it was shocking to suddenly find myself again among so many uniformed, cherubic-looking but boisterously rebellious young women. I led two workshops. In the first, I was surrounded by 20 fourteen-year-olds who seemed developmentally appropriate in that they were disgusted by almost everything I said about sexuality. In the second workshop, nine 16 year-olds sat coolly and sullenly, indicating not only that they already knew everything I had to say, but that it was BORING. That

*Our society is finally accepting that you can't talk about AIDS without talking about sex. Let's make it clear that you can't talk about sex without talking about politics.*

is, until the end, when I ditched my rap about AIDS and began asking them some general questions about how they learned about birth control (they didn't), whether they learn about safe sex from their parents (they don't), whether girls were still getting "reputations" (absolutely), and whether they talk to their friends about sex (hardly ever, and only their very best friends). They livened up considerably, despite painting a bleak picture of silence, shame, and misinformation surrounding sexuality. It's a picture that is familiar to most of us.

My experiences of talking to women of all ages about AIDS make it clear to me that we're in a contradictory historical moment regarding women's sexuality. Now, the nature of sex and how we deal with it in our culture means that EVERY historical moment is contradictory, but I would like to sketch out the particular dynamics that I think we need to be aware of presently with regard to women, sex, and AIDS.

The first issue is that even though the discourse on female sexuality is ostensibly opening, the parameters of that discussion remain narrow and circumscribed. For the sake of survival, religious leaders, educational institutions, and the media have decided that it's okay to specifically and graphically talk about women's bodies and sexual activities. Reading about vaginal secretions, the vaginal barrel, and menstrual blood in the N.Y. Times is as peculiar as it was to see "anal intercourse" turn up there in the early days of reporting on the epidemic in gay men. Alfred Kinsey shocked the nation in 1953 when his study on Sexual Behavior in the Human Female documented how extensively women participate in, enjoy and talk about sex. But in many ways, it has taken the AIDS epidemic to force a cultural recognition of the significance of his findings. In the pages of popular culture, we now read extended vignettes of the dilemmas of women on the singles circuits, and married women who ponder affairs or consider the consequences of ones they've already had. Yet the flip side of the "new recognition" of women as sexual beings, is the tenacity of grim and dour messages directed at us. The double-standard is alive, flourishing, and charting the terms of sexual discourse.

Once again, the "good girl/bad girl" paradigm arises to frame the experiences of

women around sex and AIDS. In the context of this epidemic, "good girls" are: the uninfected, the abstinent, those happily nestled in married, monogamous relationships, and those who were infected by blood transfusions, hemophiliac partners, toilet seats and doorknobs. The "bad girls" are almost any woman who is infected or has AIDS, especially if she: infected her baby, is a woman of color, or exchanged sex for money. A "bad girl" gets AIDS because, unless she was an "innocent victim," she did something "bad" to get it, like taking drugs and sharing needles, or having sex. She's especially bad if she enjoyed it, for the perception of female sexuality is an important factor in how women get labelled — if she was passively "doing her duty" she could graduate to "good girl" status. This is illustrated by the comment of a well-respected male AIDS educator who I overheard discussing women who contracted AIDS through heterosexual transmission. These women, he intoned, are the only group who get AIDS, not because of something THEY did, but because of something that was done TO them. This analysis of the passivity and objectivity of female sexuality is, unfortunately, not uncommon. AIDS provides yet another context for the re-enactment of the cultural myth of woman as inferior, woman as vamp and vampire, woman as vessel of transmission, and the sexual woman as dirty and diseased.

Lesbians experience a particular configuration of contradictions with respect to AIDS. Since we are often subsumed under the overarching category of "homosexuals," we too are the targets of spiraling homophobia and AIDS-related gay-bashing. On the other hand, AIDS is much less efficiently spread by female-to-female contact. Although this has not catapulted lesbians into the "good girl" realm, it has rendered us and our sexuality virtually invisible in this epidemic. Lesbians are getting AIDS and lesbians are dying of AIDS and certainly scores of lesbians are doing AIDS-related work, but the only attention that lesbians are getting, not surprisingly, comes from lesbians ourselves. There is virtually no research specifically on lesbians, sex, and risk; there is little provision for lesbian IV drug users with AIDS; the CDC and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health make no distinctions in their statistics for lesbians, so that we can understand the numbers and organize around the risk. We are not, as some thought at the beginning of this epidemic, "the chosen people"; instead, we shoulder much of the burden with little of the recognition.

For us as feminists, the irony of the sexual discourse during this epidemic is that there may be greater openness and more facts, but it occurs in the context of the politically constricted, conservative ambience of the late 1980's. Because of AIDS, lots of people are more able to talk about sex, but we won't necessarily like what they're saying. Those Catholic girls, for example, knew lots of facts — certainly more than most of us knew at that age — but they had largely adopted the attitudes of their parents, i.e. that of the dominant culture. The messages they had absorbed included a disdain for women who were "promiscuous," and for gay people who should just stop being gay because didn't they know they were just killing themselves, and a certainty that sex was dangerous and would kill you.

This juxtaposition of sexual openness and sexual conservatism is possible because the medical discourse is dominating the discussion of AIDS. For many people, even many involved in AIDS education, this is preferable to a moral discourse of sin and damnation. In the face of virulent homophobia, many have rightfully argued "AIDS is a health problem, not a moral problem." Yet what is often forgotten in this attempt at reframing, is that a medical analysis is not antithetical to a moral analysis, but that in fact, the two are often identical. The dominant medical discourse in this country is a highly ideological system that has never been a friend to women and gay people. God knows, the medical profession has a dramatic history of the sexual

repression of women, including the routine performance of clitorectomies in the 19th century in women who were considered too active, too sexual or too rebellious. In the 1980s, physicians continue to struggle for hegemony over female sexuality by attempting to define and control our every orgasm, sexual twitch and tingle — or lack of them.

Some of the most dramatic triumphs of the early women's movement were those directed toward reclaiming our bodies and our sexuality from the medical profession.

*AIDS provides yet another context for the re-enactment of the cultural myth of woman as infector, woman as vamp and vampire, woman as vessel of transmission, and the sexual woman as dirty and diseased.*

And, at the risk of sounding like Richard Nixon, now more than ever, we need an active and vital feminist movement to provide a political context in which to analyze the medical facts of the AIDS epidemic, and in which to organize to overcome the obstacles to effective AIDS education and interventions for women. A medicalized discourse on AIDS leaves us with body parts, diseases, statistics, and the individual plight of individual people divorced from any social context. The medical model is empiricism couched in the dominant ideology. It is a refusal to deal with issues of civil rights, access to care, or discrimination. Yet it is, after all, impossible to talk about health care in this country without talking about power and privilege. And it is impossible to talk about sexuality without talking about power and privilege. Feminism has consistently spoken to issues of power related to gender, race and class, and this kind of analysis is essential to develop programs that work.

AIDS education for women that doesn't account for the economic powerlessness and vulnerability of women in this society fails to speak to the specific problems for women who exchange sex for money. If you earn your living or support your children with sex, what are your options in this epidemic? Similarly, many women remain in relationships for lack of economic options. It is likely, therefore, that this same dependence will make it less possible, if not impossible, to demand safer sex from their partner. The women's movement has long pointed out that rejection, battering and desertion are familiar consequences for women in this culture who have tried to exercise sexual agency.

Similarly, AIDS education for women must address racial and cultural differences regarding sexual attitudes and behaviors. When we teach women to demand safer sex, and to communicate with their partners about sex, are we setting up women whose cultural norms dictate that only "whores" talk about sex? We need to determine how to empower women around sexuality, while not estranging them from their background and culture. Is it possible?? If it isn't, the consequences of failure are enormous.

What I'm really talking about is reframing issues around AIDS within a political context. Our society is finally accepting that you can't talk about AIDS without talking about sex. Let's make it clear that you also can't talk about sex without talking politics. The feminist movement has almost always been divided about sexual politics, and some of those conflicts have been most heated over the last 5 years. But feminists need to come together over AIDS, we need to start setting the terms of the sexual discourse, and we need to do it in a way that takes into account the powerlessness and vulnerability of women around sexuality. We need to ensure the concept of "safer sex" means more than latex, but is expanded to include reproductive freedom and freedom from sexual abuse and coercion. We will never stop AIDS, after all, as long as women can be raped. Yet

we must also construct a discourse based on sexual pleasure of women. To quote Amber Hollibaugh:

We must build a movement that validates the right for a woman to say yes instead of no; a movement that thinks we haven't heard enough about sex rather than too much...

We cannot afford to sacrifice sexual pleasure for women to the necessity of saving lives during this epidemic. We cannot blithely ignore our problems with sexuality, that each of us approaches sex from a different background, with a different perspective. We must remember that certain educational tools, such as techniques that emphasize "eroticizing safer sex" may be miles from where a particular woman is at in terms of her sexuality at this moment. Yet we must continually assert our right to pleasure and empowerment. It is our responsibility to ourselves, and our legacy to those young women, like the ones at Quincy's Catholic school, who are just coming of sexual age. For all our sakes, we must continue to create outrageous visions.

Janice Irvine is the Women's Education Coordinator at Boston's AIDS Action Committee.

**"Speaking Out" is part of our continuing effort to provide a true forum of opinion for the community. We encourage you to send your ideas, feelings and comments to us, and to respond to ideas expressed in this space. The opinions expressed are those of the author and are not intended to represent the views of the GCN membership. Submissions must be TYPED, DOUBLE-SPACED, AND NO LONGER THAN FIVE PAGES. Send to: Speaking Out, GCN, 62 Berkeley St., Boston, MA 02116.**

## Community voices

Continued from page 4

grief so that we may continue to live, to love, and to look each other in the eye even in the face of death in our community. We need not be ashamed of our gayness and we must not be ashamed of our sorrow.

And yes, the NAMES Project — a work of tremendous beauty and tragedy — is a place at last for our grief to come home.

Thank you for coming out of the closet...and for a lovely, astute, and poignant article.

Yours,  
Elinor Roberts  
Oakland, CA

## Give something back to Black brothers and sisters

Dear GCN:

I have just read Vol. I, # 3/4 of *Black/Out*, the magazine of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays. It was exciting reading and gave me a great deal of hope and energy when I had hit a political low spot.

I especially enjoyed Barbara Smith's short story and the Features section, including a talk by Audre Lorde, an interview with Bayard Rustin, Michelle Parkerson's description of the Jewel Box Revue featured in her documentary film, and Gil Gerard's fascinating account of how the 1983 twentieth anniversary March on Washington leaders came to include Audre Lorde as a speaker and endorse the Gay Civil Rights bill.

I am a white lesbian activist who grows continually from the legacy of struggle I find in the writing and lives of Black activists. I urge those of us who are white to give something back to Black sisters and brothers:

- subscribe to *Black/Out*, P.O. Box 2490, Washington, D.C. 20013; \$10/4 issues
- send a contribution over and above the low subscription price to insure the survival and growth of the magazine
- order extra copies for friends
- plug the magazine in your local gay and feminist publications; be sure to include the subscription information.

My best wishes for the pioneering work of the National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays and *Black/Out*.

Courage in the struggle,  
Rev. Jan Griesinger  
Athens, OH



## Women's Studies

Continued from page 1  
ther class meetings.

When asked why Schaub was reinstated in the course, Associate Dean Fred Campbell said that while the course instructor's actions "went strictly by the book," a small number of students came forward to support Schaub's contentions. Further, said Campbell, since the deans felt that Schaub's position might have some validity and there may have been a violation of due process they gave him a passing grade. Campbell would not elaborate on what university actions may have violated "due process." Campbell explained the reinstatement: "Rather than penalizing the student without absolutely clear evidence, we didn't want to punish him. Since we couldn't tell who was right, we gave him the benefit of the doubt. There were special circumstances." When asked if Schaub had threatened to file a lawsuit against the university Campbell stated, "I honestly don't know. We weren't acting as if we were under the threat of a lawsuit."

Schaub has pushed his complaints beyond the university claiming a desire to fully air the issues of man-hating and the advancement of political ideologies in the classroom. He has publicized his cause by appearing on local talk shows and being interviewed in newspapers.

On April 15, Schaub brought his complaints about the course before a hearing of the State Senate Law and Justice Committee. The committee is conducting a fact-finding hearing focused on three legal issues: the possible misuse of public funds for political purposes, issues regarding possible violations of the state's equal rights amendment, and possible harassment of students by intimidation. Lydia Mori, staff attorney for the Chairman of the Committee, Senator Kent Pullen, said the purpose of the hearing was to obtain input and determine if legislation is needed to broaden the state's harassment laws or equal rights amendment. When asked of the possible outcome, Mori said, "I don't think anything is going to come of it." Mori commented on Schaub's rise to fame and reported financial windfall from the publicity; "I can't believe, it makes me sick."

The hearings opened with a statement by Sen. Janice Niemi. She questioned the propriety of a legislative committee looking into issues of academic freedom and likened it to McCarthyism. Later in the hearings when a senator asked a witness if the instructors were really pushing politics, Niemi interrupted, saying "there's nothing wrong with that." Observers at the hearing said the university administration admitted fault for mishandling a disciplinary action, and expressed confidence and support for the women's studies program. Campbell told *GCN*, "The Women's Studies Department here is a very solid program. We believe they have a right to take a political position, and that's not a problem for us [the administration]."

As far as the Senate hearings go, the university administration believes that both deciding course content and procedures of academic discipline are matters for the faculty and university to decide, according to Campbell. This position was reiterated by the faculty senate which overwhelmingly passed a resolution on April 13 condemning the state senate hearings.

Student activists on campus have formed the Coalition in Support of Women's Studies. Lesbian-feminist Annette Sacksteder, an organizer of the Coalition, said the course spends little time specifically discussing lesbianism, but instead focuses on "issues of difference" which she said include race, age, class and sexual orientation. She added that Schaub had already been kicked out of the class when the two class meetings specifically devoted to discussion of lesbianism took place.

Sacksteder said members of the Women's Studies Department have taken a defensive stance, seeming to apologize and minimize the course content. "There's no reason for any of us to be defensive about lesbianism or socialism. They are real integral parts of feminism," she said. Sacksteder and Bonnie Hoben, another organizer in the Coalition, both expressed disappointment with the way the Women's Studies Department's reluctance to publicly denounce Schaub. All instructors have been silenced by order from the dean's office to "protect student confidentiality." Such a limitation seems outrageous to campus activists when the student in question has gone so public. As a result of the silencing order, activists said

they have experienced what feels like a lack of support from the very department they are defending. When reached by *GCN*, faculty in the Women's Studies Department confirmed that they could not speak on the record about the case.

The Coalition drafted a statement on academic freedom to be submitted at the senate hearings. The statement was endorsed by political groups and individuals, including the Law Women's Caucus, the National Lawyer's Guild, the Lesbian Support Group, Students Against Apartheid, Students Against U.S. Intervention in El Salvador, Radical Women and the Freedom Socialist Party. But neither the Women's Studies Department, nor the university administration gave endorsement.

Students complained that members of the department did not develop a strategy to deal with the Schaub case and have thus been put on the defensive.

□ filed from Boston

## Acting up

Continued from page 1

health care program; public accountability of AIDS programs; and an end to quarantine, mandatory testing, and discrimination against PWAs. ACT NOW also demands an end to the use of "inflammatory, isolating language which promotes medical misinformation."

### Addressing diversity in AIDS activism

While most activists expressed optimism about the events, several criticized ACT NOW and local AIDS action organizations for failing to reach out to women and people of color. The 50-member national steering committee of ACT NOW includes approximately 15 women and five people of color, said Terry Beswick, national coordinator of ACT NOW. In addition, several activists in San Francisco said the protests lack adequate focus on pressing AIDS treatment issues.

"The groups are still run mostly by gay white men. We need to be linked with people of color and the women's movement. We have not been wildly successful at this, but the upcoming events should help bring people in," said Bradley Ball, a member of ACT UP/NY.

Maria Maggenti, a member of ACT UP/NY's women's committee, said women are often ignored by predominantly white gay male AIDS organizations. But, she said, ACT UP has attempted to address its own racism and sexism through outreach to women and people of color and by educating themselves on the issues. "The men in ACT UP tended not to be as advanced politically as women. But the meetings have been feminized, and the men by and large welcome our presence. The group has grown tremendously but it has been a very painful process," said Maggenti.

Women, especially women of color, are increasingly hard hit by AIDS, explained Maggenti. "We have to get women more involved in AIDS activism. AIDS points out the possibility of bringing up reproductive rights issues, of generating public resistance to the oppression of women," she said.

On May 4, the women's committee is organizing a protest at Shea Stadium, home of the New York Mets, to dramatize that "women must take power, and men must take responsibility" in negotiating safer sex in heterosexual relationships. ACT UP has reserved a block of 280 tickets from which to unveil banners declaring: "AIDS Kills Women," "Strike Out AIDS," "Men Use Condoms," "No Glove, No Love" and "Silence Equals Death." The group will distribute safer sex information using baseball terminology. Maggenti said the group even managed to convince a condom manufacturer and the Mets' management that it was National Women and AIDS Awareness Day in order to obtain free condoms and an announcement over Shea Stadium's public address system.

Also scheduled for May 4 is a safer sex education drive at public high schools in New York. ACT UP members will canvass Manhattan's five boroughs, teaching "young women to take power, and young men to take responsibility" in sexual relations, said Maggenti.

Kendall Thomas of ACT UP/NY said that the heavily white gay male group has failed to address people of color, who comprise 55 percent of AIDS cases in New York State. He said ACT UP and ACT NOW were only beginning to challenge the "ideology and structure of racism that they

Continued on page 7

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**May 2 - 5, 1988**

<p><b>MONDAY, MAY 2</b> <u>10:00 AM - 12:30 PM</u> <i>National and International Contexts</i> <i>The Virus</i> <u>2:00 PM - 4:00 PM</u> <i>H.I.V. Infection in New England</i> <i>Cofactors in H.I.V. Infection</i></p>	<p><b>TUESDAY, MAY 3</b> <u>9:00 AM - 12:00 PM</u> <i>The Costs of Care</i> <i>The Continuum of Care</i> <u>2:00 PM - 4:00 PM</u> <i>At Risk Groups:</i> <i>I.V. Drug Users &amp; Pediatric AIDS</i></p>
<p><b>WEDNESDAY, MAY 4</b> <u>9:00 AM - 12:00 PM</u> <i>Testing and Screening for H.I.V.</i> <i>Experimentation; Confidentiality</i> <u>2:00 PM - 4:00 PM</u> <i>Fiscal Priorities; Values in Education</i> <i>Responsibilities of Caretakers</i></p>	<p><b>THURSDAY, MAY 5</b> <u>9:00 AM - 12:00 PM</u> <i>What Have We Learned and</i> <i>Where do We Go From Here</i> <u>2:00 PM - 4:00 PM</u> <i>Neglected Agendas:</i> <i>Women, Minorities, and Adolescents</i></p>

**Speakers Include:**  
*Boston Mayor Raymond Flynn*  
*Robert Schooley, Harvard Medical School*  
*Laureen Kunches, Massachusetts Department of Public Health*  
*George Seage, Boston Department of Health and Hospitals*  
*Larry Kessler, Aids Action Committee*  
*Mary Ann Hart, Executive Office of Human Services*

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Reprinted from Real Paper, "Best of Boston," Fall 1980.

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**Vera**, a film by Sergio Toledo. Starring Ana Beatriz Nogueira.

## Out of the celluloid closet

**Boston Lesbian/Gay Film Festival.** At the Nickelodeon Cinema. April 29-May 12.

By Michael Bronski

With independent movie theaters closing and larger conglomerates taking over smaller conglomerates, many people were worried that Boston may have seen the end of the small, alternative film festival. But this year USA Cinemas, and the premiere booker George Mansour, have done it again with the fourth annual Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

Running from April 29 through May 12 at the Nickelodeon Cinema, the Festival will feature 15 films, almost all of them first run, Boston premieres. The films range from the Brazilian *Vera*,

about a lesbian who wants to pass as a man but has relationship problems with her lover who insists that she did not become a lesbian to have an affair with a "man," to the Canadian *Night Zoo*, which looks at the life of a gay man who makes his living as a petty crook as he attempts to come to terms with

his father's death. *Night Zoo* recently won 13 Genie Awards (the Canadian Oscar). *In a Shallow Grave* is a beautiful retelling of James Purdy's Southern gothic, homoerotic love triangle concerning a disfigured war veteran, a lonely widow and a travelling handyman. *Je Tu Il Elle*, by lesbian filmmaker Chantal Ackerman, examines the inner life of a young French woman.

But what will make this gay and lesbian film festival quite different from others around the country is the inclusion of overtly political films. *Not All Parents Are Straight* and *Rights and Reactions* are new documentaries examining the lives of lesbians and gay men and the personal and political fights we face every day; *Chuck Solomon: Coming of Age* is an award-winning study of a gay man dealing with AIDS in his own life and in the lives of those around him.

GCN movie critics Michael Bronski and Elizabeth Pincus especially recommend: *Pouvoir Intime*, *Je Tu Il Elle*, *The Outsiders*, *Night Zoo*, and *Vera*. □

## Diva

Continued from back page

hard to imagine Jessye Norman, or any other Black singer, could do the same and escape criticism or ridicule even though it is more than 30 years since Marian Anderson appeared at the Met, and many Black women singers have established their careers.

Listening to Norman and looking at her career it struck me, as a gay man who is involved with and writes about the arts and popular culture, that there are incredible similarities between Norman's position as a Black artist and those of gay artists. While Norman did not have the privilege of deciding to "come out" as a person of color, she, like openly gay artists, must carry the extra baggage of knowing that what she does will be judged on who she is perceived to be as well as how she performs. It is understandable how, in that apocryphal story, Kathleen Battle might not want to be a Black American soprano just as gay artists may not want to be solely identified by their sexuality.

The second thought I had while attending the concert was how wonderful it was to sit among so many Black audience members (probably about 20 percent) and how different that was from almost all of the meetings and social functions I attend sponsored by progressive groups with active anti-racism policies and commitments to including people of color. Not that these intentions are not the best — it's just that the realities are so different. The pleasure of listening to this great artist perform while sitting in such a diverse audience — Black, white, straight and many openly identifiable gay and lesbian couples — was both politically exciting and satisfying. Although such places of "high culture" such as the opera and the symphony are seen by many

as elitist — and it is true that because of economics and accessibility they are many times not open to all people — it seemed to be a perfect melding of art and politics to be sitting in Symphony Hall with this audience.

Watching and listening to Jessye Norman is a thrilling experience. The beauty of the vocal instrument is only enhanced by contemplating the complexity and dignity she brings, not only to the stage, but to life itself. □

## Acting up

Continued from page 6

are a part of. This process is starting to bear fruit. The only way to change policy on the issue is to build coalitions of people from different classes, races and sexual orientations."

He said the upcoming actions are designed both to reach out to people of color and to bring them into ACT UP and ACT NOW. On May 3, ACT UP will distribute information at churches in predominantly Black and Latino neighborhoods. And on May 5, ACT UP will rally at the Harlem State Building, which houses the State Department of Corrections, to protest the "inhuman" treatment of PWAs in prisons. "This must be an ongoing process. It is important for ACT UP to be sensitive to cultural and linguistic differences. We have a lot to offer these communities and they have a lot they can offer back to us," said Thomas.

Hank Wilson, of AIDS Action Pledge in San Francisco, said the ACT NOW events do not adequately address AIDS treatment issues. He explained that the events fail to "help people understand why we are angry" and do not bring the government's failure to make treatments available to PWAs into clear focus. "We must begin spotlighting specific issues and not just say 'wow, isn't

Continued on page 10





# AIDS INFORMATION FOR ALL OF US

PRODUCED BY THE GAY COMMUNITY NEWS ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AIDS  
TO OFFER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR FEEDBACK AND/OR TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE, CALL (617) 426-4469.

**A**nyone interested in statistical information about AIDS — such as numbers of people with AIDS (PWAs), who and where they are, how many have died — is faced with a problem. The most timely and comprehensive data by far comes from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which issue weekly reports. But this information, though seemingly “objective” numerical data, is both limited and biased.

While we feel that statistical information about who has AIDS is important, and will publish the CDC’s numbers regularly in the pages of *GCN*, we feel it is equally important to examine the ways the CDC data, from its collection to its presentation, obscures the realities of the disease’s transmission and prevalence. In addition to the breakdowns by sex, race and transmission category, we plan to feature other statistics as well. In order to present some of the many facets of the epidemic, we hope to provide data about geographic prevalence in the United States and in other countries, breakdowns based on disease diagnosis, HIV status, life expectancy after diagnosis, age, and other factors. The list is long and

will continue to grow as the course of the epidemic unfolds.

## Where the numbers come from

The CDC, based in Atlanta, compile national statistics on AIDS (comparable data is not published for AIDS-Related Complex — ARC) based on reports from state health departments and physicians. Standard diagnostic forms are completed by physicians when they diagnose a case, and these are sent to state departments of health or the CDC.

The process of diagnosis itself results in underreporting of AIDS cases. For example, when the CDC expanded their definition of AIDS last year to include many symptoms and conditions previously classified as ARC or not thought to be related to AIDS, earlier statistics were not revised to reflect the numbers of people who had actually died of AIDS. Not all physicians are adequately trained to make an AIDS diagnosis, so many people who have AIDS continue to be misdiagnosed. In addition, some doctors who are motivated to protect their patients from the stigma attached to AIDS (sometimes by patients themselves, or their families) may be reluctant to report an AIDS diagnosis. Other political or economic factors contribute to underreporting. For example, a recent *New York Times*

article revealed that homeless PWAs who were staying in city shelters were not diagnosed as having AIDS because they would then be excluded from the shelters. Housing specifically for PWAs is enormously overburdened.

In addition, many people who lack access to adequate medical care — poor people, people of color, IV drug users, prisoners, teenagers and women — will not come in contact with the people who do the reporting and will be misrepresented in the statistics. Prisons, for example, are notorious for their failure to recognize and report cases of AIDS.

## How the numbers can mislead

It is also important to examine how the presentation of the CDC numbers is distorted. The categories listed in the CDC table inaccurately represent data about transmission. By presenting risk groups (primarily gay/bisexual men and IV drug users) under “transmission categories,” the data tells us little about which high-risk activities are associated with the spread of AIDS and perpetuates the myth that certain kinds of people are inherently carriers of the disease.

By grouping the AIDS data in such a way, we lose sight of people who would not neatly fit into one of these categories. Figuring out

where certain cases would be listed in the CDC’s framework can amount to an odd guessing game (e.g. where would we see a case of a lesbian with AIDS whose partner is an IV drug user?).

Each “transmission” category also reflects particular biases:

**Homosexual/Bisexual Male:** This category obscures what actual activities these men might have engaged in to acquire the disease, as if simply being gay or bisexual is risky business. This category’s focus on group identification rather than activity also perpetuates ignorance and denial among men who may identify as straight but have had sex with other men. It conveys to them that they are not at risk (because they aren’t “gay” or “bisexual”) and that they can ignore information about safer sex practices.

**IV Drug Abuser:** The CDC offer moral judgments in their presentation of statistical data by identifying IV drug users as “abusers.” (One AIDS activist commented that this is comparable to having a transmission category labeled “sexual pervert.”) This category obscures what actual behaviors may have transmitted AIDS among the reported cases. For instance, though this is the category with the highest rate of transmission for women, it is not actually clear whether some of the IV-drug-using women contracted AIDS through sexual contact (rather than shared needles or works) with other IV drug users. According to the CDC’s hierarchy of transmission categories, as long as a woman with AIDS has a history of IV drug use, this is the category to which she is assigned. This flaw could distort the statistics for heterosexual transmission, giving rise to dangerously misleading theories — like the one put forth by Robert Gould in a recent issue of *Cosmopolitan* magazine — that vaginal intercourse is safe.

**Homosexual Male and IV Drug Abuser:** While this category exists for cases in which the primary mode of transmission cannot be determined, in all likelihood all the other transmission categories include many cases of multiple risks. Since this is the only published category with more than one risk factor, it implies that here lies the only transmission uncertainty. The obscurity of transmission data for multiple-risk communities seriously limits the effectiveness of prevention/education programs.

The ways the CDC further break down AIDS cases are also fraught with biases. The most glaring example is the subcategory of race called “other/unknown.” More than three fourths of the cases listed in this category are Asian/Pacific Islander (335) and American Indian/Alaskan Native (57). Putting these groups in the “unknown/other” category trivializes their importance and thwarts education efforts among them by obscuring important transmission information. We welcome your input about the CDC numbers we print and suggestions about statistical information you would like to see. □

## U.S. Adult/Adolescent AIDS Cases as of April 4, 1988

Transmission Categories	White	Black	Hispanic	Other/Unknown	Male	Female	Total
	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)	Number (%)
Homosexual/Bisexual Male	27,851 (79)	5,576 (38)	3,624 (45)	354 (68)	36,605 (69)		36,605 (64)
Intravenous (IV) Drug Abuser	2,038 (6)	5,294 (37)	2,986 (37)	52 (10)	8,108 (15)	2,262 (51)	10,370 (18)
Homosexual Male and IV Drug Abuser	2,659 (8)	1,030 (7)	557 (7)	21 (4)	4,267 (8)		4,267 (7)
Hemophilia/Coagulation Disorder	487 (1)	37 (0)	39 (0)	11 (2)	550 (1)	24 (1)	574 (1)
Heterosexual cases	402 (1)	1,606 (11)	315 (4)	10 (2)	1,054 (2)	1,279 (29)	2,333 (4)
Transfusion, Blood/Components	1,047 (3)	212 (1)	104 (1)	35 (7)	910 (2)	488 (11)	1,398 (2)
Undetermined	668 (2)	742 (5)	359 (4)	35 (7)	1,427 (3)	377 (9)	1,804 (3)
<b>Subtotal</b>							
<b>[% of all cases]</b>	34,352 [60]	14,497 [25]	7,984 [14]	518 [1]	52,921 [92]	4,430 [8]	57,351 [100]

Total number of AIDS-related deaths: 32,545

## IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO BUT 30 MAKES A GREAT J.O. PARTY

BY CHRISTOPHER WITTKÉ



Len Burrow

**O**n a Saturday night in early April, a crowd of about 30 gay men met for a jack-off party in a large Cambridge apartment. A friend of a friend had called with the invitation to a leather/levi J.O. party that would be taking place the first Saturday of the month. Apparently the group had organized three such parties before and each was more successful than the last. We were given the first name of the host, the address of the apartment and told to bring whatever toys we wanted. Beer and munchies would be on hand.

My lover, who has a very healthy appetite for sex betrays his Southern Baptist/South Carolina roots by developing a case of the vapors when the subject comes up for discussion. Sex is generally something to be felt, *seen* even (if the men in the porn videos are hot enough), but not heard about in polite conversation. So when Bruno con-

tacted us the week before the party I leapt at the offer on behalf of my lover and myself.

“All right!” I squealed, “I’ve been waiting for this forever. Can you imagine? This is going to be so hot, I can hardly stand it!” My response was symptomatic of my Connecticut/Recovering Catholic roots; tantalized by even the thought of something sexual, I am able to whip myself into an anticipatory frenzy and save the guilt until right after the orgasm.

My lover was characteristically silent and just a little pale.

“This is going to be great...I can hardly wait,” I enthused.

We arrived at the party exactly at its 10 p.m. starting point. I figured there’s no sense in being fashionably late to a J.O. party, you never know what you might miss. My lover was visibly nervous, in fact, his lips

were trembling and his face was twitching. I have to admit to experiencing some butterflies in the stomach. And the sentimental side of me kept reminding myself that this was going to be my one and only first J.O. party. I hadn’t felt so virginal in ages!

A dark curtain had been placed inside the entrance way so that latecomers could be admitted without exposing the goings on to people outside. Those entering were asked who had invited them and then told to sign in (first names only) on a guest list. Grocery bags had been set near the entry way for an optional clothing check.

Other curtains had been hung strategically to delineate separate spaces, about five in all between the first floor and the upper levels of the apartment. A sign hanging in the living room read: “No sucking, fucking or penetration, we insist!”

Continued on page 10



# Safer Sex and Drug Use Guidelines

Information for gay male, lesbian and bisexual communities

Safer sex can include: massage, hugging, kissing, erotic talk, phone sex, masturbation (solo, pairs and groups), using your own vibrators, dildos or other sex toys and s/m, butch/fem role-playing, fantasy scenes, bondage and other activities that do not involve the exchange of semen or blood (including menstrual blood).

Do not allow a partner's semen or blood (including menstrual blood and blood drawn from piercing, cutting or shaving) to enter your vagina, anus, mouth or breaks in your skin.

Be aware that some risk of exposure to immune-suppressing infections (such as mono and amoebiasis) may be associated with the exchange of vaginal secretions, saliva, urine and feces.

Use condoms for fucking (anal and vaginal intercourse), for licking/sucking penises and for covering dildos and other sex toys. Use water-based lubricants. Use latex barriers (dental dams or other plastic/latex materials) for licking/sucking cunts and assholes. Using nonoxynol-9 or other spermicides with condoms and latex barriers may add extra protection.

Alternative insemination may put you at risk. Be sure to discuss risk for AIDS with potential donors or sperm bank.

Your body's ability to fight all disease, including AIDS and its related illnesses (such as Kaposi's Sarcoma and pneumocystis carinii pneumonia), may benefit from general good health — good nutrition, lots of rest, exercise and nonabuse of alcohol, poppers and other drugs.

If you use IV drugs, follow the guidelines below.

## Sex between men

Use a condom for fucking or being fucked (genital-anal contact).

Use a condom for sucking or being sucked (oral-genital contact).

For finger-fucking or fisting (anal penetration with fingers or hands), use latex gloves or finger cots. Use water-based lubricants.

Be aware that some risk of exposure to immune-suppressing infections may be associated with rimming (anal-oral contact) — use a latex barrier. Risk may also be associated with watersports (urine) in the mouth, rectum or in open cuts. If you share dildos, vibrators or other sex toys, use

condoms or clean toys with a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water.

## Sex between women

For licking/sucking cunts, use latex barriers (dental dams or other plastic/latex materials) between the genital area and mouth. Be especially careful to avoid the exchange of menstrual blood.

For finger-fucking or fisting (vaginal or anal penetration with fingers or hands), use latex gloves or finger cots. Use water-based lubricants.

Be aware that some risk of exposure to immune-suppressing infections may be associated with rimming (anal-oral contact) — use a latex barrier. Risk may also be associated with watersports (urine) in the mouth, rectum or in open cuts. If you share dildos, vibrators and other sex toys, use condoms or clean toys with a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water.

## Intravenous drug use

Do not share works (needles, syringes, droppers, spoons, cottons or cookers).

Do not re-use needles; use fresh cottons each time.

If you must share or re-use your works, clean them as follows: dip needle and works into 100% bleach, draw up and release three times, dip needle and works into water, draw up and release three times (in an emergency, rubbing alcohol, vodka or wine can also be used). As an alternative, boil works in water for at least fifteen minutes. Use a fresh solution each time you clean your works.

## Sources

For these guidelines, the GCN AIDS Committee reviewed and interpreted safer sex literature produced by the organizations and individuals listed below:

AIDS Action Committee of Massachusetts (Boston)  
 Charlottesville AIDS Resource Network (American College Health Association) (Charlottesville)  
 Community Health Awareness Group (Detroit)  
 Gay Men's Health Crisis (New York)  
 Haight-Ashbury Free Medical Clinic (San Francisco)  
 Health Education Resource Organization (Baltimore)  
 National Coalition of Black Lesbians and Gays (Washington)  
 Patton, Cindy and Kelly, Janis — Making It: A Woman's Guide to Sex in the Age of AIDS, Firebrand Sparks Pamphlet #2  
 Rhode Island Project/AIDS (Providence)  
 San Francisco AIDS Foundation (San Francisco)  
 San Francisco Department of Public Health Jail Medical Services (San Francisco)  
 Spectrum (Washington)  
 Substance Abuse and AIDS Task Force (San Francisco)  
 Third World AIDS Advisory Task Force (San Francisco)  
 Women's AIDS Network (San Francisco)

## Resource phone numbers

National AIDS Hotline: 1 (800) 342-7514  
 AIDS Action Committee (AAC), Boston: (617) 437-7733  
 AIDS Action Committee (AAC) IV Drug Use Taskforce, Boston: (617) 437-4200  
 Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), New York: (212) 807-6655  
 National Minority AIDS Council (NMAC), Washington, D.C.: (202) 544-1076  
 Women's AIDS Network, San Francisco: (415) 864-4376

# MODERN J.O. HISTORY 101

The San Francisco and New York Jacks are gay men's organizations devoted to exploring masturbation. One of the first "sex positive" responses to the AIDS epidemic in the early '80s, these two venerable organizations are still thriving today. Functioning in much the same way as the bath culture has in the gay male community, the Jacks' philosophy is influenced more by pleasure than fear of contagion. Dedicated to the joy of cruising, and of liberating the id in a treasure trove of hedonistic abandon, the Jacks parties are just like the baths except for that one crucial detail. Masturbation is the activity, the *only* activity, and a very hot activity at that.

It's kind of surprising to realize that there aren't Jacks groups with hundreds of members in every city. To put it into perspective, look at any national gay guide from the mid-seventies until

around 1980 and you'll see pages of bath-house listings with many establishments in the least likely of places. Of course, many of the baths have gone, or been legislated out of business, but one would think capitalism would have discovered and exploited the jack-off market in spite of the anti-sex, anti-pleasure, anti-homosexuality stance of Reagan's America. Instead, organizations like the Jacks have grown to meet the demand. In spite of the fact that so many people have bought the illusion that AIDS has somehow made us all "more serious about relationships," there is a need for these activities and a growing number of people happily willing to admit it. As yet, no organization is calling itself the Boston Jacks, but in the best grassroots tradition, smaller groups are at last springing up outside of the pleasure-for-dollars marketplace. □ — Christopher Wittke



## DOING IT TOGETHER. ANOTHER LOOK AT SAFER SEX AND DRUG USE

AIDS has dramatically changed the gay and lesbian community. For many of us, the loss of health, the loss of life and the fear of illness are overwhelming. At the same time, we continue to struggle to live with AIDS, to fight its spread and right wing political manipulation, to come to terms with our sadness, and to care for ourselves and each other. Thinking about safer sex and IV drug use is a piece of this enormous task we confront daily — whether we have AIDS or ARC, have tested positive for HIV (the virus widely believed to cause AIDS), have tested negative for HIV, believe we are at risk for infection, don't know what our risk might be, believe we are at low risk, or love people who need information.

Our decisions about safer sex and drug use shouldn't be dependent on doctors and tests; *all of us* may be at risk for AIDS and/or other sexually transmitted or drug-related illnesses. *All of us* need to try to take care of our health and need to make our own decisions about our sex lives.

So, this issue of *GCN* inaugurates a long overdue safer sex and IV drug use guideline section. It will be printed weekly in the classifieds portion of the paper, and monthly in the features pages along with safer sex anecdotes, tips on how to have pre-sex conversations about risk for AIDS and other illnesses, and information about studies on the relationship between various practices and AIDS.

The guidelines sub-committee of *GCN's* Advisory Committee on AIDS hopes our approach is as sex-positive as possible. We want to confront the prevailing "no sex is best" attitude, and we challenge in particular the idea that those of us who have AIDS shouldn't have sex or must necessarily take different precautions than people who don't have AIDS. For example, while sexually transmitted illnesses like mono or hepatitis are far more dangerous to people with AIDS than to people whose immune system is intact, it may make sense for many people who do not have AIDS to choose to take precautions against such illnesses.

Our guidelines come from a wide variety of sources aimed at various communities concerned about the AIDS epidemic and health in general. We use a range of language, hoping everyone can relate to some of it. Finally, we encourage your feedback and contributions to this new safer sex and IV drug use column. We hope it will evolve as readers respond and as new information becomes available.

Assessing our individual risk for AIDS and for other illnesses is the first step toward using any set of guidelines. This includes taking stock of our sexual and drug use histories and that of our past and current sexual partners; if we don't know the history of past partners, we have to decide whether to consider the lack of information an indicator of risk. For current partners, it means talking about past and current practices. Any blood transfusion received before March of 1985 may also be a risk factor.

Each of us also has to think about his or her body's general health to figure out level of risk. In assessing overall health, take into account the fact that alcohol, cigarettes, and other drugs reduce the body's ability to fight illness, as do inadequate nutrition, "stress" and lack of exercise. It's also essential to know the specific condition of various body parts. For example, a cut or infection in the mouth may lead to a decision not to deep kiss. Similarly, be aware of any indication of

stomach or throat problems. Checking health status every day should become part of our routines.

The fact that each person's health and sexual history is different makes general guidelines very difficult — in fact, impossible. Complicating the issue are the unknowns about AIDS transmission — while we seem to have solid facts on the dangers of anal intercourse, for example, the risks associated with wet kissing are far from clear. Our guidelines aren't the last word on anything, but we hope they will be another starting point for individual risk assessment.

So what about kissing anyway? Our committee wrangled for a long time about that one. We noted that there is no evidence wet kissing or exchange of saliva causes AIDS infection. But then again, we told each other, HIV has been found in small quantities in saliva — and kissing can facilitate transmission of hepatitis, mono and herpes. These illnesses could be devastating to those of us who have AIDS or ARC or whose immune system is otherwise weakened. And any illness that taxes immunity may make AIDS a greater risk. So how should we talk about wet kissing? Categorize it as unsafe and perhaps play into the "everything will kill you" bandwagon? Or say it's safe and smooth over the possible dangers? As our guidelines show, we decided we couldn't categorically describe wet kissing as safe, although again, decisions about kissing will depend on each person's health, history, partners and their partner's history.

While our guidelines cover a wide range of possible ways of contracting AIDS and other illnesses, they focus on those behaviors that involve exposure to blood or semen, the most likely routes of AIDS transmission. While getting fucked in the ass without a condom appears to be the most dangerous sexual activity, vaginal intercourse, oral sex with a menstruating woman and oral sex with a man can also be considered high-risk behaviors if no latex is in the picture.

Rimming and anal-fist fucking are particularly troublesome areas. They fall into widely varying categories in safer sex literature and neither of these behaviors alone has been documented to transmit AIDS. However, rimming or oral-anal contact can transmit amoebiasis and hepatitis. Like diseases spread through wet kissing, these illnesses may damage the immune system or be seriously debilitating for those of us who have AIDS or ARC. Similarly, damage to the rectal tract during fisting can be dangerous if followed by anal intercourse without a condom — the fisting may increase vulnerability to AIDS transmission afterwards. Again, while we don't want to contribute to the already pervasive anal-phobia, these practices can contribute to AIDS risk as well as risk for other illnesses.

Similarly, watersports and scat are safest on unbroken skin, although neither urine nor feces have been shown to carry HIV or transmit AIDS. The problem is that these activities may lead to other infections.

Sharing IV drug works that may be contaminated is very risky. In the absence of clean free needles, it's crucial to carefully clean works after every use. Our guidelines on intravenous drug use describe different ways to do that.

We welcome responses to our guidelines — please tell us what you think and please consider contributing to this new column. □





## J.O. party

Continued from centerspread

There were about ten people congregating in the dimly-lit living room section, while a video called *Leather and Sweat* and the second Bronski Beat album were playing in another section. My lover and I sat next to each other and made small talk along the lines of "Gee, this is interesting," and "Isn't that a cute sign?"

All of the guests made nervous eye contact but at this point there was no sign of overt sexual behavior. It was vaguely reminiscent of the seventh grade dances where the students just stared at one another for the first four songs and then Mary Alice Choquette and I would bravely take to the floor and bounce up and down in what we liked to consider a "dancing style." In other words, it was just like the Boston Ramrod on a Saturday night.

But was my role at this party to be the same as in seventh grade? Would I have to be the first to whip it out and start whacking? What would Mary Alice Choquette think of me now? Fortunately, our host appeared from behind the curtain completely naked and said "Okay, let's get going," or something to that effect. It takes guts to break the ice in the nude, and I respected it.

The doorbell rang periodically and people dressed in various leather and denim accouterments entered. People drifted toward the video area and others wandered upstairs. Containers of Foreplay lubricant and paper towels had been placed strategically about the premises. The sound of the occasional spank and groan of pleasure drifted from the upper levels.

Of course I had to go investigate. Leaving my lover talking quietly about his job in the kitchen, the poor dear, I drifted to the bedroom where I discovered that chains, hand and leg cuffs had been attached to the bed. A sign was posted above which read, "Please, for everyone's safety, keep your jiz to yourself!" The thrill of watching the spanker and the spankee, as well as those watching them melted away the last of my inhibitions.

A friend once described the infamous Mineshaft in New York as being like a bakery in which all of the aromas and sights make it difficult to chose one special treat. That was what this party was like. After walking among several men of all shapes and sizes with my dick hanging out, I felt camaraderie, validation and extremely horny. My lover warmed up, too, and also joined in the festivities.

At one point I was sitting on the corner of the bed, masturbating myself. I was watching my lover jack off with someone else, and the host was dressed in leather chaps and leaning against the wall and his dick was about half a foot from my face. Three men were about a foot behind my left shoulder trading off spans on each others butts, and a guy who looked like he was a living Calvin Klein underwear ad, replete with perfectly white briefs was getting his pecs punched, hard, and moaning in enjoyment. At that exact moment I made eye contact with my lover, who grinned at me, and I thought, "It doesn't get much better than this."

It wasn't long after this that the very attractive Daddy-type in the harness and cap gave everyone a demonstration in the Sensual Application of Clothespins with yours truly as the model. A boy's reputation is his best friend, but I'd lost mine years ago...and I think it gave my lover some ideas!

Among the first to arrive and the last to leave, my lover and I experienced our first J.O. party as an exciting and positive event. A houseful of horny men experimenting with each other — enjoying the freedom without the worry — is an experience that all gay men, and anyone who struggles with the "limitations" of safe sex, should enjoy. This particular group was, I imagine, largely middle class, mostly (but not exclusively) white, and limited to friends of friends'

word of mouth contact. Those who weren't s/m aficionados weren't coerced into feeling uncool, they were able to find their fun in whatever ways they chose. I hope that J.O. parties become so prevalent that everyone will be afforded the opportunity for this kind of pleasure and bonding. In spite of how much fun the experience was, on some level I felt sad that there wasn't a larger arena, some bigger place with room for hundreds of men to explore safer sex. The epidemic serves to emphasize our incredible commonalities: that we are all vulnerable, and we all must weigh the options and make the right choices for ourselves. It is truly inspiring to be in a roomful of people committed to the well-being and the enjoyment of each other, as well as themselves. □

## Acting up

Continued from page 7

AIDS terrible," said Wilson

Wilson pointed out that the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) has thus far refused to speed up its drug approval process, making many potentially "life prolonging" therapies unavailable to PWAs. He added that if a foreign scientist makes a major treatment breakthrough under current FDA guidelines, it would take months or years before it could be used by PWAs in this country. "Hundreds of people die every week. Delays of this kind are not acceptable. When will people wake up and realize that we must focus on treatments to save lives now?" said Wilson.

### A national network forms

Despite criticism of the protests, most activists agreed that the actions are an important step in launching the first nationally-coordinated response to the AIDS epidemic.

ACT UP/NY, founded in March 1987, has served as a model for more than 300 groups which have sprung up around the country since the March On Washington. ACT NOW was formed to coordinate, via telephone and computer hookups, the actions of local groups. ACT NOW member organizations can hook into a computer network called Peacenet, which helps the groups maintain up-to-date information about on-going AIDS organizing. Said Miles, "This is just the kick-off. We will use this system to mobilize quickly to fight for the release of drugs, to fight news black-outs in this country, to pressure the government into doing something."

Ball told GCN the New York group served as "flashpoint of a national movement. We have simply shown people that they can channel their rage. People were doing a lot of grieving, but had no focus."

AIDS activists told GCN they were inspired by the emergence of the different groups around the country. "We are empowered by learning what others are doing and they are empowered by us," said Miles. He said many groups are organizing "inspiring" protests, finding new ways to portray and combat the epidemic.

### Highlights of national actions

ACT UP/San Diego and ACT UP/Los Angeles are planning a May 5 civil disobedience at the U.S.-Mexican border in California to protest the Immigration and Naturalization Service's (INS) HIV policy of testing all immigrants. ACT UP is working with a Tiajuana lesbian and gay group to organize the event, said member John Fall.

ACT UP/Los Angeles also plans guerilla theater at the California Republican Party headquarters on April 29, satirizing homophobic Gov. George Deukmejian and U.S. Rep. William Dannemeyer (R-Calif.) as well as Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis. Presidential candidate Jesse Jackson will address an AIDS rally at the state capital in Sacramento on May 7.

We The People, the first lesbian and gay organization in Orlando, Fla. plans a April 23 demonstration at Langford Park, the site

Continued on page 11

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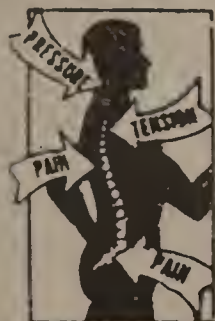


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# Dykes to watch out for



## Acting up

Continued from page 10

of frequent police harassment of gay men who use the park as a cruising area. Alfredo Martinez-Garcia of We The People said the group was also organizing the first-ever gay pride march in Orlando for June.

In Massachusetts, Mass ACT OUT plans a demonstration at Dukakis campaign headquarters in Boston, according to Mass. ACT OUT member Mike Friedman. The group will also demonstrate at the British consulate to protest the British Parliament's

Clause 29, which forbids local authorities from "promoting homosexuality."

ACT OUT/Rhode Island plans a May 6 protest at the State House in Providence to protest legislation mandating HIV testing and contact tracing. The legislation would allow the state police department to keep a list of people who test HIV-positive and require them to "act responsibly."

For specific dates and times of Boston events, see the Calendar in this issue. For information on other actions nationwide, contact ACT NOW in San Francisco at (415) 547-7973.

□ filed from Boston







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## ORGANIZATIONS

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#### OLDER LESBIAN ENERGY

Social and support group for women over 40. P.O. Box 1214, East Arlington, MA 02174. (15.48)

#### DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS

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#### LESBIAN CONTRADICTION

A Journal of Irreverent Feminism. Quarterly of commentary, analysis, reviews, cartoons & humor by and for women who agree to disagree—who are still political, but not necessarily correct. Sample \$1; sub \$5; more if/less if. LesCon, 584 Castro, #263G, SF, CA 94114. (16.--)

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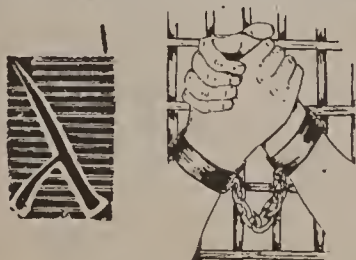
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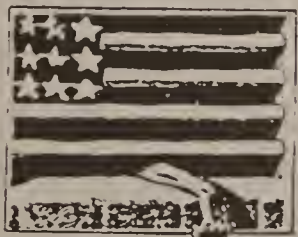
24 yr old male interested in making contact with a gay man. I've never had any gay relations and would like to meet a man who would be willing to educate me. I am physically fit, enjoy reading, music, cooking and the outdoors. Randy BRYNER, Drawer K, D-7649, Dallas PA 18612.

Black male, loves swimming, biking and good rock concerts looking to meet a lover that wants a long lasting relationship and practices safe sex. Wayne GARRETT, 48771, Box 538, Jefferson City MO 65102.

Bi-male looking for correspondence and possibly more with male/female friends. A libra, very romantic, very monogamous. Will answer all who write. P.A. CARISTO, 26321, Box 1059-1BG, Santa Fe, NM 87504

Hot? Hung? Horny? This educated inmate is ready to please. Complete freedom comes in August and am willing to relocate for the right man. Charles SKINNER, 36286, Box 2800, Lincoln NE 68502.

They have moved me (Jim MAGNER). I miss my penpals and the GCN!! Please re-route them. They have changed my diagnosis from ARC to AIDS. And I'm still a pre-trial inmate [not yet gone to trial; not enough room in Georgia prison]. They didn't let me have my address book when they moved me so I don't have my penpals' addresses. Please write. Jimmy MAGNER, 38670-019, Box 4000, Springfield, MO 65802.



I am Cuban, 28, black hair and eyes, and very sexy. Please write me to be friends. They call me "China". Jesus MIRANDA, 490424 (345), 1150 SW Allapattah Rd, Indiantown FL 34956

I would like to place a penpal ad. I've been here for 11 years, 4 to go, and I'm 41 now. Over the years in prison I lost all contact and in truth I'm scared of the free world. All I know is prison life. (Sorry). I would like to meet a fem gay man or TV/TS to befriend. I write poetry, sing, have a degree in Welding Technology, with interests in sociology, witchcraft and art. Terry DRAKE, 14162, Box 28, Pendleton IN 46064.

Light complexion Black male, curly wavy hair, Scorpio, very romantic, into sports, books, fashions. Not looking for money, only friendship. Race doesn't matter, only your mind. Justin BLACK, Y-9831, Dallas PA 18612.

Gay male, 36, seeking penpal. I like camping, fishing, and nature hikes. I also like to cuddle. Bruce KNAVEL, 86C 1128, Box 367-B, Danemora NY 12929.

I am a Black male seeking correspondence from TS, TV, and she-males. Sulka, where are you? I seek only friendship that might develop into something more. I enjoy reading, writing, and romantic settings. Please respond with sincerity because my environment gives me all the deceit I can deal with. Lionel COQMARD, 076023 (426), PO Drawer 1072, Arcadia FL 33821.



#### BOOKS FOR WOMEN!

We are an anti-authoritarian workers collective and we offer FREE books to women in prison. We also accept donations of books or money from non-prisoners. Write: Books For Prisoners, Left Bank Books, Box A, 92 Pike St, Seattle WA 98101.



I am a black woman. I love to dance and knit, to go to the movies and to sit in the sun. Please send me your newspaper while I am here and your penpal book. Thank you. Sharon DIXON, 161125 (472), PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024.

Just loved the ad, C.J.... Maybe it'll work. Go for it! Deb

Single gay female seeking a reliable penpal. I enjoy swimming, chess, music and poetry. I'll answer all mail. Inez HOGAN, #20, PO Box 8540, Pembroke Pines FL 33024.

I'm an artist and write poems. I'm looking for that special woman. Age has no meaning. I'm French and Italian. I'm not into role playing. Amber HARTFORD, Box 7007, Carson City NV 89702



I was very happy to find your address from a friend here. I'm a Black male, 28, and very interested in writing to someone. Also in receiving some books on gay people, race relations and spy stuff. Stay strong and sweet too! Robert JOHNSON, 123451 K-163, 1000 St. Clair Rd, Springfield AL 35146.

Your newspaper has helped me to look at all the other 'brothers and sisters' all around the world as well as taught about the world conditions around us. That's a good way to learn, if you're still green behind the ears like me! I would like a penfriend, not for financial support or headgames, but just for a caring conversation. Jeff ('Hershey') HERSHBERGER, 208211, Box B, Anamosa IA 52205.

I'm a prisoner in NY state who wishes to correspond with TVs and TSs in the outside world. I'm also interested getting GCN. I'm a very handsome Italian. Will send photo. Robert ESPOSITO, 85A 1378, Box 500, Elmira NY 14902

I go by 'Nancy'. I'm a very sexy Black Cuban. Next time when I have my colored pencils I will do a better drawing for you [this written next to a gorgeous drawing of some flowers in 2 colors]. I have Cuban sugar in all my body! I hope to find a friend to write to. Pedro HERMANDEZ, 088998 (941), 1150 SW Allapattah Rd, Indiantown FL 34956.

I've been here for some years now and feel like I have years of love bottled up inside me looking for freedom. I'm looking for someone I can relate to out there. I enjoy reading mysteries and writing letters. Hopefully there is someone out there to share some fun letters with. Jeffrey L. DANIELS, Rt 1 Box 36, Jackson NC 27845. Gay male, very athletically inclined (handball, softball, greco-roman and freestyle wrestling) and openminded and would enjoy corresponding immensely. Race is unimportant. Please send photo if you can. Robert S. DUKE, 200 S. Sutherland Ave, Monroe NC 28110.

Hi! Young looking 30 yr old dominator, but might bend (flexible) for the right person. I'm all the man you've yet to discover. Write to Jeff WINTERS, A-51369, Box 300, Vienna IL 62995.

I was allowed to read the GCN for the first time today and would like to take this opportunity to say that if all publications was as honest people would be better informed. I am very much interested in having someone on the outside to write to me. I'm a bisexual, 33, looking for a friend. Walter STARKS, PO Box 4431 (B-1), Reidsville GA 30499.







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# calen

1 SUNDAY TO 7 SATURDAY

Continued from page 15



26 Tuesday ☐ Before Stonewall at Tufts University, 7:30pm.

Cambridge ☐ The Women's School presents "Where  
Are the Women in Your Family Tree?" The  
Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 10am-1pm. Free. Info:  
354-8807.

## May 1 Sunday

Amherst ☐ "AIDS: Woman to Woman Transmis-  
sion: the Myths and Realities." Workshop co-  
sponsored by Hampshire College Women's Center.  
Wheelchair accessible. Hampshire College, Franklin Pat-  
terson Hall, East Lecture Rm. 2-5pm. Info: (413)549-4600  
x540.

Boston ☐ ACT UP/Boston sponsors a mid-day  
sleep-in at Michael Dukakis' house at 85 Perry Street,  
Brookline. Protest alleged lack of space and care providers  
in Boston hospitals. 2pm. Part of the ACT NOW week of  
actions. Call 49-ACT UP for further information.

Boston ☐ Moliendo Vidrio, a band from Puerto Rico,  
performs in homage to mothers and Puerto Rican women.  
Mass. College of Art, 621 Huntington Ave. 7pm. \$12 in  
advance, \$15 at door. Info: 524-7002.

## 2 Monday

Boston ☐ Names Project quilting bee. See 4/28 listing.

Boston ☐ New England War Tax Resistance Clinic.  
First Monday of every month. Community Church, 565  
Boylston St., 3rd floor. 7-9pm. Info: 731-6139.

## 3 Tuesday

Boston ☐ Boston Center for Lesbians & Gay Men  
annual meeting. Election of new officers. Piemonte Rm.,  
City Hall, Congress St. entrance. 7pm. Info: John  
266-2069.

## 4 Wednesday

Boston ☐ Names Project — New England meets to  
plan quilt's Boston visit (June 16-19) and to coordinate  
making of new panels. Piemonte Rm., City Hall, Congress  
St. Entrance. 7pm. Info: 451-9003.

Boston ☐ ACT-NOW's national Spring week of ac-  
tions continues with "Video works on AIDS." Nor-  
theastern U., 360 Huntington Ave. 7pm. Info: 661-7737.

## 5 Thursday

Boston ☐ Boston Lesbian and Gay Pride Planning  
Committee meets every Thursday. Rm. 801, Boston Ci-  
ty Hall, Congress St. entrance. 7pm. Info: 267-2113.

Cambridge ☐ Lecture on "Feminism, Reproductive  
Technologies and the Social Control of Women."  
M.I.T. Rm. 66-360. 4pm. Free. Info: 253-8844.

## 6 Friday

Boston ☐ Positive Directions: peer-led HIV + con-  
fidential support group meets. (Also 5/6.) 7:30pm. Info:  
787-8870 (leave message).

Dorchester ☐ Queen Ida and the Bon Temps  
Zydeco Band. Strand Theatre, 543 Columbia Rd. 8pm.  
\$15, \$12.50. Info: 282-8000.

Boston ☐ Greater Boston Lesbian and Gay Political  
Alliance Auction '88. Lenox Hotel, 710 Boylston St.  
7:30pm. \$5. Info: 661-3661, 265-0348.

Boston ☐ Celebrate the 15th anniversary of Olivia  
Records at a reception and fundraiser. Rooftop Ballroom,  
The Parker House. Performances by Cris Williamson,  
Lucie Blue Tremblay, Tret Fure, Dianne Davidson, and  
Nancy Vogl. 8-10pm. \$50. Info: 661-1252.

Cambridge ☐ "Sensuous Strokes," erotic lesbian  
poetry reading. Womyn-only event. The Women's  
Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8pm. Info: 354-8807.

Boston ☐ ACT-NOW's national Spring week of ac-  
tions continues with a demonstration sponsored by MASS  
ACT OUT at New England Mutual Life Insurance Co. to  
protest insurance company discrimination. 501 Boylston  
St. Noon. Info: 661-7737.

Brookline ☐ Am Tikva shabbat service and oneg.  
Please bring something sweet to share. Workmen's Circle,  
1762 Beacon St. 8pm. Info: 782-8894.

## 7 Saturday

Boston ☐ ACT-NOW's national Spring week of ac-  
tions culminates with a march and demonstration to  
unite all sectors of society hit by the AIDS crisis. Music,  
speakers, entertainment. Meet at City Hall Plaza, follow  
Freedom Trail through Faneuil Hall and Downtown Cross-  
ing to the Common. 1pm. Info: MASS ACT OUT,  
661-7737.

Boston ☐ Boston N.O.W. holds a rally, "Rights  
Before Roses." Rally for affordable childcare, parental  
leave, reproductive rights, parenting rights for lesbians and  
gay men. Boston Common bandstand. 1pm. Info:  
782-1056.

Boston ☐ Workshop on "Handling Visits, Vacations  
and Family Events." With Jean Chapin Smith, LICSW.  
10am-4pm. \$55. Info: 876-2113.

Cambridge ☐ Women's Craftsmarket at the Cam-  
bridge YWCA. Wonderful crafts! Wheelchair accessible.  
11-5pm. 7 Temple Street, Central Square area.

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# Calendar

23 SATURDAY TO 30 SATURDAY

6 Friday and 7 Sunday ☐ Celebrate Olivia Records' 15th anniversary. See opposite page.

## 23 Saturday

**Boston** ☐ **Living With AIDS Theatre Project** presents a workshop to collect the experiences and stories of those connected in any way with the AIDS crisis every Saturday. The goal is to create a theater music piece based on the workshop material. No performance experience necessary. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

**Boston** ☐ Lesbian and Gay **Freedom Trail Band** presents "Stepping Out," a dance concert. Dance to waltzes, polkas, Latin music, and Big Band sounds of the Freedom Trail Band, and Boston's Lesbian and Gay Swing Band, "Cheek to Cheek." Lessons provided. Creative footwear encouraged. Alcohol-free, refreshments served. YWCA, 140 Clarendon St. 9pm-12. \$6 in advance, \$8 at door. Info: 327-9853.

**Cambridge** ☐ CMAC presents "**The Composers' Collective.**" Cambridge Multicultural Arts Center, 41 Second St. 8pm. \$8 general, \$6 student/senior. Info: 577-1400.

## 24 Sunday

**Cambridge** ☐ **Nice Jewish Girls:** Jewish lesbian potluck brunch and ongoing group. Info: Tovah 864-5257, Susan 364-9172.

**Boston** ☐ Metro Healing presents **ongoing healing group** for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Meets every Sunday. Metropolitan Health Club aerobics room, 209 Columbus Ave. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 267-1154, Joseph 357-6926.

**Boston** ☐ Boston Unitarian Universalist Gays and Lesbians service, "**Music, Creativity, and Power.**" Arlington St. Church. Service at 7pm, music at 6:30pm. Info: 547-5209.

**Watertown** ☐ GLOW: Gays and Lesbians of Watertown **monthly potluck.** Newcomers invited. 7pm. Info: 489-2519.

**Boston** ☐ **Rock Against Sexism** Disc Party/"T-Dance." 1270 Club, 1270 Boylston St. 6-10pm. \$2.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Attica,** a film about the 1971 prisoner rebellion, to benefit the Prison Book Program and GCN's Prisoner Project. With "Attica, 1971...Massachusetts, 1988," a talk by Linda Thurston, National Peoples of Color Task Force on Criminal Justice & Justice Program, AFSC. Refreshments served. First Congregational Church on Cambridge Common. 7:30pm. \$5 more if/less if. Info: Mike 426-4469.

**Boston** ☐ Ionian Society sponsors **Gay & Lesbian Greek Dance.** Traditional Greek and disco dancing. Greek appetizers. Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St. 7-11pm. \$5. Info: 628-8592.

**Boston** ☐ ADODI/Boston **Black Gay Men's Support Group** meets for discussion in the South End. 3-6pm. Info: David 451-6872, Charles 884-2478.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Women's International Support Network** brunch. All foreign women welcome. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. Info: 354-8807.

**Boston** ☐ **Sweet Honey in the Rock** performs. ASL interpreted. Wheelchair accessible. Symphony Hall, 301 Mass. Ave. 8pm. All seats reserved, \$12/\$15. Info: (202)483-1010.

**Boston** ☐ **Boston's Other Voice** special guest Rosayln Bruyere, founder of the Healing Light Center Church, discusses spiritual approaches to healing. WROR 98.5FM. 12:30am (Monday morning).

## 25 Monday

**Cambridge** ☐ **Lesbian Rap** topic: "Looking for Ms. Right." The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8-10pm. Free. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

## 26 Tuesday

**Medford** ☐ "**Before Stonewall,**" a film about gay men and lesbians before the 1969 riots. Tufts University, Barnum 104. 7:30pm. Free.

**Boston** ☐ "**I Got a Name,**" a cabaret to benefit the **Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt.** With special surprise guests. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 9pm. \$15. Info: 451-9003, 536-0972.

## 27 Wednesday

**Boston** ☐ Names Project **quilting bee** sponsored by **Dignity.** 355 Boylston St. 7pm. Info: 451-9003.

**Cambridge** ☐ "**The Politics of Incest: Feminism, Child Sexual Abuse, and the Media,**" a forum investigating the role the media plays in promoting myths about incest. ASL-interpreted, wheelchair accessible. Bartos Theater, The Weisner Building, 20 Ames St., lower level, M.I.T. 7pm. Free. Info: 253-8844.

## 28 Thursday

**Boston** ☐ **Boston Lesbian and Gay Pride Planning Committee** meets every Thursday. Rm. 801, Boston City Hall, Congress St. entrance. 7pm. Info: 267-2113.



24 Sunday ☐ Sweet Honey in the Rock. Symphony Hall, 8pm.

**Boston** ☐ Names Project **quilting bee.** Upcoming quilting bees: May 2, 12, 19, 26. Arlington St. Church, Boylston St. entrance. 6-9pm. Info: 451-9003.

**Boston** ☐ Boston Chapter of the **Lambda Car Club** meets. All who own or enjoy vintage, classic, or high performance vehicles are welcome. Info: 424-7754.

**Boston** ☐ Jazz vocalist **Henrietta Robinson** will appear with Molly Ruggles and Ann Wagner. Somewhere Else, 295 Franklin St. 9:30-11:30pm. Info: 423-7730.

## 29 Friday

**Boston** ☐ **Ongoing healing group** for PWAs and all those wishing to be of support. Meets every Friday. Santa Fe Hair Salon, 528 Tremont St. 7:30-9:30pm. Info: Brian 267-1154, Joseph 357-6926.

**Boston** ☐ **Positive Directions:** peer-led HIV + confidential support group meets. (Also \$16.) 7:30pm. Info: 787-8870 (leave message).

**Cambridge** ☐ **Black Rose Lectures** sponsors a talk by Beverly Woodward and Feyodor Finkel entitled "Underground in the East: Independent Peace and Labor Movements in Eastern Europe and the USSR." M.I.T. room 9-150, 105 Mass. Ave. 8pm. Free. Info: 524-0781.

**Waltham** ☐ **Las Vegas Night** to raise funds for The Support Committee for Battered Women. Quality Inn, Totten Pond Rd. 7:30pm-12. \$2. Info: 891-0724.

**Northampton** ☐ Storyteller Anastacia Gourley presents "**Women's Myths, Women's Lives.**" Storytelling and discussion of folklore perspectives. People's Institute, 38 Gothic St. 7-9pm. \$8 at door. Info: 268-7854.

**Worcester** ☐ AIDS Project — Worcester **support group** meets every Friday night for HIV positive, PWA's, PWARC's, lovers, friends, and the worried well. Open to all lesbians and gay men regardless of HIV status. 51 Jackson St. 7-9pm. Info: Dana, 755-3773.

**Boston** ☐ Boston 9to5 hosts a **Get-Together for Pay Equity Activists and Friends.** Old South Church, Copley Sq. 5:30-7:30pm. \$2. Info: 348-2970.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Women's coffeehouse** with Sue Krantz, folksinger. The Women's Center, 46 Pleasant St. 8pm-12. Info: 354-8807 (TTY/voice).

**Boston** ☐ **ACT-NOW's national Spring week of actions confronting the AIDS epidemic** begins with a demonstration at the Dukakis campaign headquarters. 105 Chauncy St. 4pm. Info: 661-7737. Sponsored locally by MASS ACT OUT.

**Boston** ☐ "**A Dance for Equality**" sponsored by the Boston University Lesbian/Gay Alliance and other B.U. minority organizations. George Sherman Union basement, 775 Commonwealth Ave. 9pm-1am. \$4. Info: 353-9808.

## 30 Saturday

**Cambridge** ☐ **Dance Party and Talent Auction** to benefit the Boston Bisexual Women's Network. Wheelchair accessible. Alcohol- and smoke-free. Men welcome. Ticknor Lounge, Boylston Hall, Harvard Yard. 7pm. \$3. Info: 247-6683.

**Boston** ☐ Boston 9to5 workshop: "**Working Parents' Survival Kit: How to Get Your Employer to Provide Support for Child Care.**" Childcare available. UMass/Boston Downtown campus, Park Sq. 9:30am-12:30pm. \$5. Info: 348-2970.

**Boston** ☐ "**Body Electric: Healing with Group Sensual Massage**" for gay and bisexual men, led by Mykolaz Hazen. 7:30pm. \$12. Info: 522-9164.

**Boston** ☐ **ACT-NOW's national Spring week of actions** continues with "God Save the Queens," a demonstration in solidarity with British lesbians and gay men against Clause 29 at the British Consul General's house on Beacon Hill. 2pm. Sponsored by MASS ACT OUT. Call for exact location: 661-7737.

**Dorchester** ☐ **Women's Words:** "Overcoming Writer's Block," day-long workshop facilitated by Beth Hodges. Slide show by Maida Tilchen. Potluck dinner. Info: Beth 288-6384.

**Boston** ☐ **Living With AIDS Theatre Project.** See 4/23 listing. Club Cabaret, 209 Columbus Ave. 10:30am.

**Cambridge** ☐ **Zero Moving Company** presents "An Evening of Solos and Duets." Joy of Movement Studio Theater, 536 Mass. Ave. 8pm. \$10. Info: 492-7578.

**Jamaica Plain** ☐ **United Fruit Company** presents "I Am What I Wear." Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays through 5/22. Eliot Hall, 6 Eliot St. 8pm. \$5, \$8, \$10, \$20. Info: 547-7728.

Continued on page 14



Jessye Norman, soprano. Geoffrey Parsons, piano. At Symphony Hall. Presented by the Wang Celebrity Series. March 18.

By Michael Bronski

There is a story — undoubtedly apocryphal — that has been circulating on the gay (and straight) classical music circuit over the past year or so: Jessye Norman and Kathleen Battle, two of North America's most dynamic and elegant Black sopranos, are sitting backstage in London waiting to go on. Battle is perusing an English tabloid and reads aloud a paragraph labeling her "the Black American soprano." She looks up, annoyed, and says, "I hate it when they say that." Jessye turns to her and benignly says, "Well, my dear. Someone had to tell you."

The story is, of course, racist in its assumption that both of these performers — with their repertoire of Bach, Mozart, Strauss, Schubert and Brahms, their gracious stage presence and their truly international appeal — are attempting to deny their racial identity. (Similarly, an interview with Norman in the *New York Times* a year ago referred to her "outrageously affected" British accent. And while this speech pattern is probably not the one she grew up with — she was born in Georgia — the comment is obviously snide.) But beneath its glib assumptions, the Norman/Battle story conveys the kernel of truth that many audience members — certainly many white audience members — have a hard time conceptualizing a Black American woman performer who sings classical music. As diverse as are singers Tina Turner, Whitney Houston, Nina Simone, Odetta, Sarah Vaughn and Eartha Kitt, they all have roots in a Black American musical tradition.

Watching Jessye Norman at Symphony Hall in late March was a dazzling experience. She was, as usual, in magnificent voice: full and deep while at the same time light and effortless. As she stands on stage, dressed in a full length evening gown of purple moire velvet with a large swath of multi-

*Soprano Jessye Norman illuminates both Symphony Hall and the complexities of being a Black Diva*

## Diva delight



Jessye Norman

colored quilted material that ran across the back, you could feel her in every part of the hall. After receiving a standing ovation she performed three encores: a small German song, the beautiful "Mon coeur s'ouvre a ta voix" from Saint-Saens' *Samson and Delilah* (jazz enthusiasts may recognize the song from Nina Simone's piano version on *Nina at Carnegie Hall*) and what has become her final signature song "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands."

But attending the musical evening made

me think all the more about what a difficult position most Black opera singers, or classical performers, must find themselves in. Although some of the most famous contemporary women opera singers are Black — Roberta Alexander, Jessye Norman, Kathleen Battle, Barbara Hendricks, Sarah Reese, Martina Arroyo, Christiane Eder-Pierre, Leona Mitchell, Gwendolyn Bradley — it is important to remember that the color line at the Metropolitan Opera was broken just over 30 years ago when Marian Ander-

son, who was well into her career and world famous, sang the role of Ulrica, a witch, in Verdi's *Un Ballo in Maschera* in 1955. Since that time such singers as Leontyne Price, Shirley Verrett, and Grace Bumbrey have made international careers.

It is impossible — given this history — for the presence of Black opera singers not to be political. In 1939 Anderson was denied the use of Constitution Hall in Washington D.C. by the Daughters of the American Revolution. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt resigned from the organization and arranged for Anderson to perform a free, open air concert at the Lincoln Memorial. And although most Black women performing in opera today report that there is a minimum of prejudice against them (although there still seems to be a great deal against Black male opera singers) it would be difficult to deny that it exists.

I imagine that it feels at least somewhat schizophrenic for Black singers to perform in a repertoire of mostly white characters. With the right voice a 40-year-old woman can actually become the 15-year-old Madame Butterfly. And it is presumed that race goes through the same transformations. But to what extent can Jessye Norman become Queen Dido in Berlioz's *Les Troyens*? The bottom line is that both the singer and the audience have to think about, and contend with, the realities of race.

A reader of press materials on Jessye Norman, her program notes, or even record covers might never reveal that she is Black. And the impression you come away with is that she is above race, or at least to the side of it. Yet in an interview in the March 1988 *Ebony* Norman speaks about having to ride segregated trains and covering her ears every time she had to listen to a rendition of "Dixie" in school. There must be pressure to "prove" oneself in the classical field if one is to overcome the racial stereotypes of producers and audiences. White mezzo-soprano Marilyn Horne allows herself to go on TV talk shows and chat about her passion for baseball. Hell, she even appeared on the sit-com *The Odd Couple* as a favor to her friend Tony Randall. But it would be

Continued on page 7

Christian Steiner

## Harvey Fierstein TORCH SONG TRILOGY

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Saturday, May 7

at Berklee Performance Center 5 & 9 PM

**FolkTree Ticket Outlets:** Berklee Performance Center Box Office • All Strawberries Record Stores • Out of Town Tickets, Harvard Square • Cambridge Natural Foods • Arborway Video, Jamaica Plain • All Ticketron outlets • Teletron by calling 1-800-382-8080 • Bostix at Fanueil Hall, Boston.



For tickets and information:

FolkTree  
**641-1010**  
ConcertLine